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The Problem of the Unemployed

A Modest Proposal

ALLEN TATE

UNEMPLOYMENT in the United States is variously estimated at some round figure between ten and fifteen millions. Possibly the larger figure would represent an increase of approximately one hundred percent since January 1, 1931. But it is not within the province of this discussion to set exact figures, nor to suggest a method by which a proportion of these idle men may be returned to work. It is not likely that all the fifteen millions, if there be that many, will be permanently useless to industry. It is just as unlikely that all will be absorbed back into the industrial system in a reasonable balance of labour and capital. We who are seeking for ways to recover prosperity must face an unpleasant fact: there will remain, even after some degree of economic recovery, a staggering residue of the permanently unemployed. We are not prophets; but we need fear no excess of divination if we expect this residue to settle at the bottom of our system with the weight of about eight millions of men. Let us call this residue, whatever it may prove to be, the letter *x*. It is probable that the total number of Americans left without livelihood will reach four times *x*. For it cannot be doubted that one great cause of suffering among this class of people is the anachronism of the family, an institution that survives from the property or land system of society, in which the family was the unit of production. Thus it still regrettably happens that when a labourer falls into indigence, he drags with him a family of three or four.

Since October, 1929, when the industrial system received in symbolic form, over the ticker-tape, evidence that its cogs had temporarily jammed, there have been innumerable solutions to the problem of unemployment. These solutions fall into three classes. I allude now only to those that received official recognition, and thus had a bare chance of being tried. It is not necessary to give their history but merely to describe them briefly. One of the solutions was tried; it failed. Call it Solution Number One. Solution Number Two—a most dangerous proposal—was not tried; we may dispose of it by reminding the reader that the Dole, in all the systematic forms that it may take, was officially rejected. Solution Number Three is now about to be put to the test.

Solution Number One is, of course, that of the Hoover Administration. It is the Religious Solution, for it looked for its success to that kind of religion which is the fine flower of our enlightened spirit—the religion of salesmanship. There was, the reader will remember, a brief period set aside by President Hoover, who called round him the faithful for the celebration of what he designated Confidence Week.

I saw none of these festivities, being at the time hid in the savage isolation of a farm in Tennessee; but I heard that they were most impressive. Men marched in parades, lit up bonfires, and carried large gonfalons upon which were inscribed sundry inspiring mottoes and devotional texts, all proclaiming the faith of the marchers in American business. I was struck with the soundness of this method of economic recovery; but there remains dispersed over our population an inert minority still lost in the mists of ancient superstition; and the campaign of Confidence Week failed for lack of universal faith. Among the illiterate farmers of my neighbourhood scepticism and heresy, at a time when we had thought these vermin exterminated by public education, once more showed their heads. Certain men asserted that they cared nothing for business; that they were being *hoodooed* into buying what they did not want or need, when the whole trouble was due to their having already bought themselves into penury. The most dangerous doctrine that they uncovered from the Past was the undesirability of being in debt: when they were told that patriotism enjoined them to buy on credit to set the wheels going again, they answered that they did not wish to *mortgage* their labour to industry for a generation. If these people had co-operated with the President I have no doubt that our crisis would be long past. For the very word mortgage, in the sense of burden or misfortune or disgrace, is obsolete; we now know that the greatest incentive to consumption is debt, for we consume before we have to worry about paying, and thus we are compelled to work, and the world's work gets done. In the end the banks and insurance companies relieve us of the foolish responsibility of property, so that we enjoy the mild routine of labour and consumption, without even needing to decide what we wish to consume.

It was a crisis of religious faith, and we momentarily failed. We have dismissed Solution Number Two—that of the Dole. Number Three is a compromise measure that promises well in the failure of our religion to do the work. I should have no inclination, however, to publish this article if Number Three were a total solution to the problem of unemployment. President Roosevelt makes no extravagant claims for his Reforestation and Public Works projects. He knows that these great undertakings, because they contemplate reclaiming our lands, contain reactionary concessions to those superstitious forces that I have described. They are temporary expedients to relieve some of the unemployed, but they will not absorb that entire suffering class. There will still remain the residue x. It will be a distinct problem, but like a wise man the President proposes to solve one problem at a time. My own solution to the problem of the "residue", which I will describe in the following pages, may never be necessary. *But it will be absolutely necessary unless our people and their leaders are willing to abandon the American system.* Mr. Roosevelt's preliminary grappling with the problem of unemployment is—with the slight concession to reaction that I have noted—all in the logical direction of the American system. For he plans to have them work land that they will not have to suffer the degradation of living on; though of course it is reactionary to put them in contact with the land at all. Leaving out this element of reaction, my suggestion as to the right way to handle the permanent residue follows from the President's position. I offer the suggestion a little early, perhaps, but it is well to cast it upon the waters of opinion—whence it may return to us after many days.

II

The American system is that method of production, borrowed from England and improved, which in the last seventy years has made us the most powerful and the happiest people in the world, as well as the most humane and cultivated. We have bought up the art treasures of the world. (Of course, the French, a nation of peasants, in refusing to make the last payment on the Debt, showed their envy of us by trying to cripple us: they pretend to their own people that this repudiation is a way of inciting hatred of American institutions which, they say, will wreck the world and which they are trying to make unpopular in France.) The American system has almost annihilated the cumbersome institution of private property, especially property in land. It has put nearly the whole means of production into the hands of an enlightened minority (every industrial magnate collects paintings) who are much better able to distribute material goods to the masses than the masses are able to acquire them for themselves. The richer the capitalist becomes, the more benefits he is able to pass on to the ranks below him. This is, in brief, the American system. As a system it is beyond dispute the most efficient that has ever been achieved by mankind. But it has latterly encountered an obstacle, the obstacle of unemployment.

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Unemployment grows out of the wholly unforeseen and perhaps uncontrollable invention of what was once called the labour-saving device, but which we must now see definitely as the labour-eliminating device. Can we call a halt upon its further perfection and spread throughout the world? Surely not; for our whole technological equipment is obviously unalterable, and proceeds upon its own momentum—a process that men as mere trustees and wardens participate in, a process the benefits of which are immune to the instability and weakness of man. But the machine has made unemployment, and the unemployed are thus unable to buy the products of the machine. It has happened all over the world; there is unemployment to some extent in all the buying nations; the markets for manufactured goods are shrinking. It is a temporary embarrassment to capitalism, but, of course, no indictment of the system itself. *There must be progress.* My solution to the problem of the unemployed residue is in the spirit of American progress.

If our enlightened capitalism does not accept my solution, which is merely one of readjustment, it will have to face one of two alternative proposals that are totally subversive of the American system. These alternatives go by different names, the first usually as Socialism or Communism, the second as Agrarianism or perhaps the Property System. If the residue of the idle, the permanently idle, is allowed to go on as it is, possibly increasing every year, there will be a revolution. The Communists will seize our industrial organization and distribute its products to both employed and unemployed; by eliminating the price-system and the creation of surplus value for the five percent of the population who own the means of production, they will put everyone to work like robots, and the material welfare of each man will be enormously decreased. Our admirable mild paternalism will disappear; our highly cultivated class of rulers, who give tone and culture to society as a whole, will be destroyed; and we shall lose that zeal for the welfare of the common man that has made our civilization envied throughout the world.

The Agrarian idea I merely touch upon in order to show an example of the kind of irresponsibility with which certain Americans are meeting this grave crisis. They have even criticized President Roosevelt's Reforestation and Public Works projects: they argue that the Public Works cannot go on forever (they are not productive of economic goods, they hold), and they ask: Who will live on the reclaimed land? They demand that these men who are to receive a dollar a day and board, for improving land which will then stand idle, be put upon the land themselves. And this is the argument that exposes their fallacy, and the reactionary character of their views: they are willing to deprive the worker of the great blessings that sift down to him from industry, and to reduce him to the degraded status of the European peasant. They think that our great mechanical progress is negligible. They cry for a restoration of small property, which would lower the American standard of living; they would bring back that *unplanned* economy in which small owners fought with one another over small matters, leaving the Good of Society out of account. They say, moreover, that the good of society is an abstraction, that the only good that men know is personal. They would repudiate most of the achievements of social research, which teaches men how to be good patriotic consumers, on the ground that the data thus accumulated merely puts an instrument of oppression into the hands of the ruling class.

By an absurd paradox they argue that there is no difference between Capitalism and Communism, that under either system the labour is slave labour, that the only way to remove from Capitalism what they call a fundamental contradiction is to make all men slaves of the owning class, or to make the masses their own owners in a Communist order. They denounce the Communists no less bitterly than they denounce us, as men who with sham heroism are really following the line of least resistance. Under the preposterous notion that men lack "freedom"—when obviously, until 1929, when our unfortunate maladjustment occurred, there was never a people freer to consume more commodities—for freedom's sake they would make men, or enough men to colour society, go back and be free to resume the bestial labour of the farm. And they would ask the business man to resume small business—as if the great business men of our age had not spread, by means of quantity production and modern selling methods, a uniform blessing over the whole country at cheap rates. The Agrarians argue that man does not need the modern industrial commodities to the extent that he has had them; and what he does have of them must be made near home, in moderate-sized factories, so that wealth will not be concentrated in a few places, and in a few hands.

But they are blind to the vital question, what is man to do with himself when he is not consuming? It is the great discovery of our age that man is chiefly a consumer—that he cannot consume too much. Low consumption is the source of many evils; it leaves men idle for anti-social pursuits like the cobweb of philosophy, in which foolish opinions rise, and like the arts, which compel men to question the destiny of man. The Agrarians argue that the Communists have simply taken our great idea from us: that man is nothing but a consumer. To crown all, they—the Agrarians—have the impudence to proclaim that unless we return to small property—or rather, as we believe, to a stupid peasantry—all civilization will collapse. As if civilization did not begin with the American system!

Yet it is certain that unless we dispose of the residue *x*—the exact figures must await the outcome of President Roosevelt's preliminary program—unless we deal with the permanently unemployed, we shall have trouble. The masses of the unemployed are not consuming. They are beginning to engage in anti-social pursuits. A peasantry of course is impossible; it is not in the Spirit of the Age. And besides, Economic Laws forbid it, as well as the civilized sense of man. But Communism is more of a menace. Even apart from that danger, the unemployed are an uncertain quantity in industry, and upset its nicest calculations. Their support is a constant drain on productive enterprise. And in twenty years, as the Technocrats have shown, this class may increase to fifty million men.

III

Modern man is healthier than his ancestors of the early nineteenth century. After the enclosure laws of England in the eighteenth century went into force, a horde of bestial peasants flocked to the towns, but many of them came to this country. To a large extent they remain, those who crossed the Atlantic, in the Southern States in their original bestial condition. But nearly everywhere the industrial labourer has profited as a consumer. He has been well fed. Our improved sanitation and hygiene have also had a beneficent effect. The longevity of the American people has increased enormously. As to the labouring portion, this must be admitted to be, at present, an embarrassment; for it only increases the residue *x*. But I do think, on the whole, that the superior type of manhood and womanhood that our free institutions have created actually points to the method of disposing of a fraction of that manhood and that womanhood, now that they are a mortal drag upon our efficiency economically and a menace to us politically. They, we know well, would agree that the prime consideration is the Social Good, and not individuals.

Modern Americans have more energy than any other men, and this means that their bodies are more richly stored with the substantial fats and chemicals than any other men. Modern science has made them superior, and because modern science has also made the labour-eliminating device that has rendered them useless, we must face the criticism that we sometimes hear–that it is inconsistent to continue this process, and to let our idle citizens rot in their perfect health. We must be consistent. Our idle men have long been schooled in the true doctrine that we all exist for use. Now what might be mere waste will, through my solution, find utility, and bring back that nice adjustment of labour and capital that we greatly need.

At this point I must pause to glance at a remedy for the evil that was advanced by the *New Republic* about two years ago. It attracted far too little attention. Inflate the currency, the editors said, for the sole benefit of the unemployed; give them the money and they will buy up the goods decaying in our warehouses. Thus would labour be fed, for the factories would have to refill the warehouses. Manufacturers of tinned foods would not alone profit. We have made it clear to the public that patented cigarette-lighters and green bathroom fixtures are also overwhelming necessities. Capital would be relieved of some of its surplus goods. It would be a splendid temporary remedy, but realism compels me to regard its consequences. The money thus distributed and spent would shortly, as it should, return to the Capitalist: more of this extraordinary money would have to be printed, which would also go to the Capitalist. It is a repetitive system, but I am convinced that it is one of the most sensible temporary schemes that have been devised.

There is another method that deserves notice before I come to my own proposal. It has the merit of being but a further extension of that beneficent tendency of our great system to enlist the female portion of the community in productive pursuits, thus freeing women from the bondage of the home and relieving men of part of their burden. Yet the work would be light. Prostitution is considerably easier than bending over a loom. And it would be more profitable in the long run; especially since a woman's span of life is longer under the modern conditions that permit her to keep till fifty the lustre and bloom that faded at twenty-five in the cotton-spinner or street-walker of a century ago. It is obvious that the productive possibilities of prostitution conducted on lines of modern efficiency have been sadly neglected. It is equally obvious that the existence of several million unemployed women of all ages and attributes provides a perfect occasion for remedying this defect.

Where all the other great businesses have been so profitably rationalized, we have allowed this, the oldest of all and, until recently, the equal of any in popularity, to remain positively mediaeval. We are still content to let it be hemmed about by archaic laws and customs handed down from a barbarous age, laws and customs that clearly operate in restraint of trade and would not stand the test of constitutionality. Everyone knows that it has been through a reasoned rejection of superstitious taboos that modern progress has been made possible. For instance, as long as the mediaeval notion of "usury" prevailed, which forbade (by labelling it a "sin") charging interest on loans made for non-productive purposes, the institution of banking, the backbone of the modern world, was rendered impossible except at a very low level. Again, the ancient prejudice against enterprise and ambition (which the Dark Ages damned by calling "the sin of avarice") kept business at a deplorably primitive stage for centuries, forcing the populace to waste their time in tending what they called their "souls" and thinking about an imaginary next world.

But these and other equally obstructive delusions have yielded to the light of reason. There is ground for thinking that the restraints which still hamper prostitution would quickly melt away when the benefits to industry of an effectively organized supercorporation of prostitutes were recognized. The main deterrent, of course, is the atmosphere of unrespectability that hangs around the profession. Much has been done to alleviate this situation by our modern social scientists, sexologists, and anthropologists, by the theatre and the motion pictures, by the whole process of modern enlightenment and freedom. But the final word that would end all the old prejudice has not been spoken.

The benefits to business of giving legal status to several million prostitutes would vastly exceed the benefits of 3.2 beer. Real estate values would receive an immediate healthy impetus throughout the nation, as the hetaerae moved into quarters suitable to their trade. They would relieve the furniture industry by buying, on the installment plan, artistic furniture from Grand Rapids. The *Ladies' Home Journal* or the *Woman's Home Companion* would instruct them in the art of arranging the furniture in the best taste. (What great improvements we have made over Europe! Our art is manufactured and distributed, so that the people don't have to bother about it. We now buy up and appreciate the art made by the European peasant-societies without at the same time having to live like peasant-hogs; we reproduce this art by machinery with great saving of time, which is money.) The garment trades, the telephone companies, and numerous other lines of endeavour would share in the proceeds. A simply collected tax on premises or licences would go far toward balancing the national budget.

Moreover, under the dispensations of this industry, the men, once common labourers, would advance a step socially and become salesmen. Because our great spirit of social improvement has found new names for old occupations, no salesman would ever again be called a pimp—just as no one thinks of applying to a banker, who has mastered the art of making money out of money, the archaic name of pirate. But this would not be the only direct benefit that the male portion of the unemployed would receive, as the public mind progressed in understanding of the industry's merits. There is no need to enlarge on the opportunities for growth under efficient management of male prostitution, always a backward branch of the calling. Women and men alike would have time to improve their minds—another sign of emancipation from the peasant-system. The subscribers to the book clubs would be tripled, our authors would flourish, and the great service rendered by the press to civilization would be appreciated by larger numbers. Altogether the advantages for both culture and business under this system should not be overlooked. As the "ladder industry" for the next boom it would seem far more promising than pre-fabricated houses.

Is there a general market for the commodity? Such a question becomes superfluous as soon as we examine the facts in a businesslike manner. It should be obvious that the economic possibilities of man's passional nature have scarcely begun to be tapped. We have hitherto been content to let ourselves be limited by notions of monogamy and of continence. There is no doubt that once freed of these notions and given the facilities here proposed, man's capacity for sensual indulgence would expand immeasurably. Through a large-scale system of prostitution organized along thoroughly up-to-date lines this great force could be set to productive uses, and the wheels of industry would resume their profitable revolutions. Here again it is simply a matter of clearing away the outworn prejudices; and here again the work has already been largely done. Just as the mediaeval conception of "avarice", when it was subjected to the light of emancipated reason, turned out to be business enterprise and laudable ambition, so that mediaeval notion of "lust" has been seen more and more clearly to be nothing but man's natural and harmless desire to be himself and enjoy life; we have come to realize that there is no real reason why the simple desires of the flesh should be curbed and mortified after the model of pathological ascetics. In our present emergency, an emphatic word from a high source—from the United States Chamber of Commerce, from the American Bankers' Association, from the House of Morgan, from Henry Ford, from our Leader—would suffice to bring all public-spirited citizens, who compose the vast majority of the commonwealth, to the support of so salutary an enterprise.

It is true that even when the inhibitions and prejudices still lingering from the past had thus been finally cleared away, there might be a certain measure of reluctance on the part of many to alter the peasant ideas of life, to break with old ties and superstitions, and give full support to the new dispensation. But here would come to our aid Mr. Roger Babson's method called advertising. Could not our prostitutes having formed a vast merger, advertise so effectively that the rest of the community would be persuaded to buy what it does not feel a need for? After all, not necessity but salesmanship and maximum consumption are the spirit of the age. Take our taste in cigarettes. This taste, to use a Behaviouristic phrase, which is always useful, is now largely sexually "conditioned". We buy the cigarettes because the girl in the picture is "alluring". A bathroom scene in the advertising section of the *Saturday Evening Post* succeeds in making a throat gargle appear to have the virtues of an aphrodisiac. The new industry would have an unsurpassed advertising technique ready to hand. Of course, since we understand so well the use of the Conditioned Reflex, the new industry might be compelled to make its commodity attractive through cigarettes, reversing the process now in use.

I mention this solution of the unemployment problem for what it is worth; but I cannot believe completely in its restorative efficacy, since it has the same defect as the proposal of the *New Republic*: its benefits would be temporary. Prostitution is tied up inevitably with a particular social system: the family. Only while marriage and the family were still popular would this supplementary institution be feasible. Our American system has given us a perfectly machine-like and impersonal corporation that runs so well of itself that it requires no social system for its successful operation. The old-fashioned system of well distributed property required the family for its preservation (and *vice versa*), but industrial capitalism is capable of preserving itself without the family. The archaic peasant-family is disappearing: we are coming more and more to enjoy that self-expression through sex which was impossible under the old régime. The rationalization of prostitution would quickly carry this process to completion. The old attractions of monogamy and the home fade from men's minds, and sexual unions would tend to become wholly based on free choice—a moral system best described by the phrase Regular Irregularity. Thus a regular class of prostitutes would come to have no social function: there would be a reversion, in this sphere, to a universal system of barter. Those citizens who do not see the full implications of our improved condition, retaining some of the muddled intransigence of the old order, may sigh sentimentally at the disappearance of the harlot. We can only remind them, these men of halting vision, that the past is quite completely dead, or rapidly becoming so.

So that while this proposal might well solve our immediate problems and at last allow the current slump to make way for the inevitable boom, it would not be a permanent solution for the awkward problem of trade cycles. After all, our forefathers in clearing the forests, in carrying railroads and highways over mountain and prairie and river, in erecting our towering skyscrapers, in contriving the whole vast intricate network of corporate structure and finance which has made our civilization almost perfect, were building for the future, for eternity. We, too, owe something to posterity. If we can we must solve the unemployment problem for good and all. Since it is unthinkable that we should go off the American system into Communism or peasantry, there is only one solution to the problem of the residue *x*, the class of the permanently unemployed, and that method I will now completely describe. The exact figures pending President Roosevelt's Reforestation and Public Works must be in hand, however, before we shall know the value of x and shall be able to carry out the plan.

IV

The American Capitalist class is the most responsible class of rulers that the world has seen, and although it in no sense *owns* the labour that supports it, it is nevertheless *responsible* for it. In this present crisis the only way of making effective that responsibility is to accept all the burdens of *ownership*—though, it must be emphasized, there is no legal compulsion upon the Capitalists to do so. They will accept the burden for the *good of humanity*. The specific responsibility in the crisis would be to dispose of their useless property, in the most economical, the most humane, and the most efficient manner possible. Our age is aware that industrial economy, efficiency, and humanity are all the same thing. The permanently unemployed must be disposed of with the greatest benefit to that property—considered in one aspect as human beings—and to the buying public at large. I propose this in the immediate interest of labour and in the eventual interest of owners.

There is a certain number of useless persons. If that number increases or is even allowed to remain constant, it will, as we have seen, constitute a dire menace to order. It is the fate of labour—and who will question the logic of history?—to be placed as it is placed now. Society would suffer the least rupture, and be spared that violence to its *sympathy*—a peculiarly modern refinement of feeling—if it quietly, and in the ordinary routine of industrial technology, ***killed off about eight million workers and their families.***

It should be done, all things considered, gradually, but completed in a year lest there should be an abnormal increase of that class of persons, with the attendant perils. By looking at this scrapped property as raw material, not as productive machinery as we usually do, industry could put it to use. Economy and expediency alike suggest this course. Merely to administer to twenty-five millions of souls some kind of euthanasia would shock the public with its hideous spectacle of waste. To lay them out, even in our handsomest "burial parks", would be a serious abuse of the concept of property-in-labour—the temporary assumption upon which the whole procedure here suggested would be based. To grant to mere possessions all the rites historically allowed at the demise of sentient creatures would of course invalidate the entire program.

The unemployed head of a family, say a family of five, would report to his last owner—or, rather, I should say employer, for ownership has been invoked merely for legal sanction in the emergency. The employer would draw up a schedule of extinction, beginning with the mother in order to cut off first the reproducer. The older daughters would come next. Since extermination, as I plan it, must be gradual if we are to avoid severe economic losses, those whose turn came last, the little boys and the little girls, would have to be fed. They could be fed without loss to the employer in excess of what he would normally pay for raw material. The body of the mother first, then the body of the father, could be valued at the current price of the carbon, nitrogen, chlorine, sodium, potassium, silicon, that each yielded, and a fund deposited to the credit of the remaining family. When the children had eaten through this fund, or when, to be exact, the last child had exhausted the total credit established by the gross weight of his kin, his time would have come.

I need not suggest any precise method of putting away these good people. I need not suggest that the method be painless. We are too humane for the axe, guillotine, rope, or firing-squad. I should personally prefer some kind of lethal gas, but not being a chemist, I leave that proposal to the specialists. There should be some kind of brief ceremony before each demise —a sort of half-ceremony, to remind us that these people are half-human. Perhaps the rite could be conveniently administered to groups, or put upon the air. It would be appropriate if a distinguished pastor of the church—whose Protestant branches have marched in the vanguard of progress—could be appointed to receive the herds at the pens. Our American Christianity has never failed us in our onslaughts upon the errors of the past.

It may be argued against this scheme that twenty-five million people would yield less raw material than the same number of hogs. The objection is sound but short-sighted. I have pointed out one of the great features of the modern age: the physical superiority of our people over their ancestors. We should expect a fifteen percent larger yield than a similar enterprise could have got fifty years ago. The refining process would be expensive and it would render exorbitant the price of the finished commodity. But this criticism that I foresee takes no account of the unique and unreplaceable nature of the material. We should be eliminating the unemployed class forever—a fact that would make the material precious, and marketable, under high-pressure salesmanship, at any price.

For example, that "deep inward satisfaction" that the public gets out of a fine, animal-skin glove would deepen further could men and women wear the whole skin of a hand meticulously removed and tanned into a soft, seamless glove. The "fine art of cookery" would get a richer base for oleomargarine and the shortening oils. The potash and sodium chloride would revise the slogan, "25¢ is enough to pay for toothpaste", to: "This toothpaste is cheap at any price: Human dentifrice for humanity".

I have said that this method of disposing of the residue *x* would relieve us of the whole problem of unemployment. That is not strictly true. It assumes as accomplished a long moratorium on the invention of labour-eliminating devices; it requires for its success a stabilization of our technology. Yet should our technical equipment still further improve, the method is still workable. There would merely be a certain number of newly unemployed to kill off every year. At last machinery would take the place of hands altogether. There would be no workers left. The labour problem would be solved for all time. There is no life worth living for men who cannot work and consume manufactured goods. It is this article of our faith that makes imperative the acceptance of some such proposal as mine for the perpetuation of the American System.

English Political Thought and the Post-War Crisis

DOUGLAS JERROLD

Editor's Note. *The significance for Americans of this penetrating analysis of English conditions needs no stressing. The problems confronting England grow out of an economic order which this country derived from England, and many of the same problems confront us or are looming. The same impermanent remedies are being attempted or recommended. The ultimate choice, between the Communist State and the Corporate or Ethical State, is the same for both countries. If in England the crisis is more acute, the elements needed for the happier solution are also far stronger, as a comparison with possible American equivalents for these elements will reveal.—Mr. Jerrold has been since 1931 editor of the "English Review".*

ENGLAND today stands where Rome stood before the reign of Augustus. It has conquered and organized large tracts of the world, but it finds itself without the spiritual vitality and moral authority to build upon the foundation it has laid. It is not without relevance to the spirit of modern English youth that Mr. Winston Churchill, in re-issuing his brilliant story of the conquest of the Sudan, reminds a heedless generation in his preface "how much harder it is to build up and acquire than to squander and cast away".

The warning falls on deaf ears. To act effectively at home or abroad, a nation must believe in its own disinterestedness, and for such a belief there are two prerequisites; a belief in oneself and a belief in something outside oneself. In England today neither condition is generally fulfilled. The old inspirations—race, religion, and culture—have small appeal to a deracinated urbanized public who derive their culture from a predominantly materialistic education. To such representatives of modern thought in England as Professor Laski,* "the Western way of life is in the melting pot . . . it is able to offer material comfort, but it seems unable to discover the formulae of spiritual satisfaction". (That it should imagine that spiritual satisfaction can be based on a formula is, perhaps, equally significant.) "In the nineteenth century we could dominate India and Egypt because we believed ourselves to be the torchbearers of civilization. Now, when they challenge our mission, we have no answer."

Not all Englishmen would agree with this definition of the prevailing temper, but it has a solid basis in fact. On the one hand, the decline in religious observance and the relaxation of moral and social standards: on the other hand, the popularity of the pacifist thesis; the readiness with which we have surrendered rights long regarded as secure, in China, in India, or in Egypt; the precipitance with which we have established a new constitutional basis for the Empire which renounces every remaining right of the British Parliament over the Dominions—these things are significant of a great change of temper. It may be that all these "rights" and "standards" date from other days and are today anomalous. The important fact is that the criticism, even of the more "advanced" thinkers, has almost always been that we have surrendered too quickly and too much, whereas a nation still possessed of the normal tenacity and convictions of a world power would have laid itself open to the criticism of surrendering, if surrender were called for, too slowly and too little.

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* *Democracy in Crisis.* (University of North Carolina Press. 1933.)

It is true that fatalistic theories of the decline of the West, like that of Oswald Spengler, find no favour in England. That, however, is chiefly due to the average Englishman's dislike of any theory. In circles where this does not apply, the unpopularity of Spengler's imposing thesis is due more to the extent of our pessimism than to any lingering survival of optimism. To the Continental European, Western civilization is *European* civilization, which, at the least, even if it has lost something of its vitality, has carried human achievement higher than ever before, and has evoked loyalties still paramount. But Protestant England feels very little kinship with European civilization. To its characteristic products, the business man and the professional man (the urbanized and commercialized equivalents of Oswald Spengler's "man of race" and "man of intellect"), the thesis that Western civilization is in decline is unintelligible, because the only civilization they have ever known has never even been mature. Looking round on the ruins of his world the contemporary Englishman feels, not the sentimental regret of a man with great achievements behind him, but the puzzled despair of a man baulked at the threshold of his career. The ever-growing popularity of socialistic ideals in all classes, and particularly among the intellectuals, is due more to a belief that Socialism is the easiest way out of the risks of individual enterprise than to any passionate Utopianism, much more to a desire to shelve a personal than to assume a collective obligation. This is well exemplified by the new London Passenger Traffic Act, which sets up a combine protected by Statute from competition, but without transferring to the State responsibility for its effective action. It is significant that the pressure in Parliament for this scheme came with equal strength from both capital and organized labour. The public remained wholly indifferent.

Behind this indifference, a little cynical on the part of the propertied classes, a little sullen on the part of the propertyless majority, is the growing consciousness of a fundamental disharmony which expresses itself in an endless, though spasmodic, search after some elixir which will restore health to the body politic. It is partly to the multiplicity of these searches, to the variety and patent incompatibility of the many remedies propounded, that the present "National" state-capitalist régime owes its immunity from effective opposition. Between pacifists and imperialists; pan-Britannic enthusiasts and pan-Europeans; Communists and individualists; deflationists and inflationists; those who wish to restore property and those who wish to destroy it, the man in the street is hopelessly fogged. He cowers between an avalanche of untried schemes which he cannot understand, and an avalanche of tax demands which he cannot pay.

If one thing more than another typifies the prevailing mood, its pathetic frivolous courage, its complete irrationality, its devastating divorce from every tradition of our race except its sense of humour, it is the passing of the traditional "John Bull" of the Victorian and Edwardian caricatures, and the substitution of the "Little Man", immortalized by "Strube" in the *Daily*

Express, but living in all essentials in the work of every popular cartoonist of the day. "John Bull", that large, heavy-jowled, hard-living, hard-drinking yeoman, seemed to some an anachronism even before the end of the last century. But that judgement was profoundly incorrect. Foreign observers, from the late seventeenth right down to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, were struck with the solidarity and security of the English social system, which no continental nation could rival. This solidarity and security was due to the fact that the essential leader of English social life, as Christopher Dawson, our leading exponent of the philosophy of history, has recently pointed out, was neither the aristocrat nor the merchant, but "The Squire", who excited none of the prejudices, jealousies, and fears inspired by rank, privilege, and rapidly accumulated wealth. "John Bull" was the characteristic citizen of the England of the Squires, a man who respected "The Squire" as a squire, but who could and did stand up to him as a man. Sentence of death was passed both on "John Bull" and "The Squire" by the repeal of the Corn Laws, but the social and political centre of gravity did not finally pass from the country and the country-town to the large urban settlements until 1906, and the social results were not decisive until the grant of universal male suffrage in 1918 and universal adult suffrage in 1924. But today "John Bull" is dead, and the popular press is wiser than *Punch* in substituting for him, not a muscular independent artisan, but a poor little grinning Cockney clerk, fitting representative of a propertyless suburbanized army of taxpayers, caught in the wheels of a hopelessly disorganized world which he refuses either to accept or to reject.

This psychological helplessness of the contemporary Englishman is the fundamental fact in English political life and thought today. To understand it, it is necessary to understand the special circumstances of English social structure and political history since the Reformation, since it is these circumstances which make the failure of Liberalism not, as to the rest of the world, an incident, but something much more like a catastrophe.

The beginnings are to be found in the defeat of the English Crown at the Great Rebellion, and the consolidation of the victory of property over authority in the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688.

It is true that the defeat of the Crown saved England from the worst excesses of the French Revolution, but, apart altogether from the fact that the actual losses to life and property were infinitely greater in the English revolution than in the French, we absorbed, in the end, all the deceptive ideas of the French Revolution without having secured the compensating advantage that a strong centralized monarchy had bequeathed to France, a machine and a tradition of government independent of any class, a machine which has, in fact, persisted almost unchanged from the days of Louis XVI through two Empires, two Monarchies, and three Republics.

But the effects were profounder than that. The defeat of the Crown in 1648 and 1688 was far from being merely negative in its results. The assertion denied by the Parliamentarians at the time of the Rebellion was not the right of a King to dictate to free men, not even the right of a King to dictate to the old territorial nobility (both the poor, outside London, and the old nobility, were substantially for the Crown); but the right of the State to rule unchallenged over rich as well as poor. The defeat of the Crown meant the suspension, not the beginning, of representative government. Between 1640 and 1832 the process of enfranchising new boroughs and disfranchising old ones for legitimate purposes was suspended, and the system which was, in the days of James I, sufficiently representative to drag the Crown into a War, and, in the days of Charles I, was sufficiently popular, for the last time in English history, to be incapable of control by the rich except by a series of *coups d'état*, had, by 1832, become a farcical sham.

In the sphere of religion the results were more openly sensational. Here, even appearances were disregarded; "That which is for the public welfare," wrote Locke, "is God's will." Can we be surprised that Convocation, the governing body of the Church of England, as established at the Elizabethan settlement, after its famous meeting in 1717 met only once again in the lifetime of men still living.

This is ancient history, but what is important to us today is that, in the process of seizing the reins of absolute government over Church and State, property had been forced to destroy its own title-deeds. It destroyed all traces of administrative right and almost all the State prerogatives. Locke succeeded Hobbes as the gospel of the governing class, which had to rest its claims to autocracy on the transparent fiction that its powers were balanced—on the one hand by the

Crown, which it had twice betrayed, and on the other hand by the People, whom it had deprived of all effective representation.* Locke evolved an imposing body of doctrine to fit this fiction, but none to fit the facts, because the facts were never admitted. It is, indeed, hardly an exaggeration to say that there were no facts to fit. The idea that there was any government other than that of the rich with the power that wealth gave them disappeared from English politics with the defeat of the Crown in 1649, returned only in a very modified form in 1660, and disappeared finally in 1688. To this day the only alternative generally envisaged in England to government of the poor by the rich is government of the rich by the poor. This state of mind we owe at least as much to the facts of the revolution of 1688 as to the doctrines of the revolution of 1789.

These doctrines challenged the whole structure of society in France; in England there was no social revolution. This, however, was because the basis of government in England was largely empirical; there was no constitution to upset and no throne to destroy. In the end, precisely what had happened in France happened in England, and because of what had gone before, the results were more far-reaching. The bourgeoisie dispossessed the territorial and mercantile nobility, and the divine right of property gave way to the divine right of money, a doctrine enshrined in what is known as classical economics, and immortalized by Adam Smith for the edification of three generations of rich men. Liberalism, however, was only the solvent which enabled the bourgeoisie to climb into power, and to free money from the authority of the State. The liberal philosophy was no more tolerant of the prerogatives of manufacturers and financiers than it had been of those of the older propertied classes. The day was bound to come when someone would appeal from the popular party to the people. Freedom slowly broadening down, might, in logic, imply freedom to consume as well as to produce, and if the manufacturers could capture the machine in the name of liberty, the proletariat might do so in the name of social justice. One assertion was as good as the other. The problem loomed menacingly in a sky charged with the recollection of the American Civil War, which showed only too plainly to those who had eyes to see that party government was only possible when both parties were in fundamental agreement. And what other doctrine but *laissez faire* could preserve this essential agreement indefinitely, and how long would *laissez faire* take to die under the shadow of national rivalries contracting our export trade and pointing clearly to war. Long before 1914 it was evident to every intelligent observer that the Liberal system was breaking down. The beginnings of State Insurance and Lord Fisher's navy marked, indeed, the beginnings of the retreat from the Liberal position even by the Liberals. The War and its aftermath marked their final abandonment.

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* "Locke's 'State'", says Professor Laski, "is little better than a negative institution." (*English Political Thought from Locke to Bentham.*)

Can we not see now more clearly why, in England, the revelation of the bankruptcy of the Liberal system was particularly disturbing? Without a machinery of government or a philosophy of the State, without a privileged aristocracy, with the Monarchy reduced to a cipher, we had none of the means of executing a *coup d'état* within the forms of law, and for remodeling the State without violating traditions long sanctified by custom. So long as everything was going on all right, so long as we could trade where we liked and vote how we liked and grow richer and richer in the process, we could do without a government well enough, and our governing class could avoid the odium of governing while retaining the privileges of appearing to do so. But when the dream of progress was over, England found herself, as she remains today, at the mercy of speculators of whom not the least evil are those who speculate not with other people's money but with other people's minds. In such circumstances we pay not only for our political but for our intellectual laxity, for the fact that the doctrine of free money, involving, as it did, the gravest assaults on the economic freedom of the moneyless, committed property to the support of the whole army of intellectual as well as political liberalism. Free Trade dared to tolerate no closed ethical system. Though many of its exponents were religious men, Free Trade was, by the very nature of its being, opposed to all the implications of the Established Church, and committed to the free expression of every opinion, however hostile to the traditional authority, whether of government, of religion, or of morality. The result was that, by the end of the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie had destroyed not only the throne and the altar, but like the representatives of property in the seventeenth century, their own title deeds to power.

So long as the bourgeoisie, in enriching themselves, enriched their fellow-countrymen, and, in covering themselves with honours, avoided contaminating the fountain of honour, all went tolerably well. But when these conditions ceased to be fulfilled (and the War and the Peace and Mr. Lloyd George's Second Coalition destroyed them utterly), they were bound to leave a problem quite unique in Europe. There was no old order to be re-established. There was no peasantry to act as a counterpoise to the propertyless urban proletariat; there was no government at all in the sense of an organ of the State which was above both property and the propertyless, and could thus claim, if not to arbitrate, at least to hold the ring. Rural England, the essential basis of English solidarity and security for three centuries, had been destroyed, callously and deliberately. In the name of progress the landlords had gone into the City and the labourers into the slums. Indeed, in the dark days before the election of 1923, it seemed that there was nothing left at all in England but an amorphous governing class of professional men, which had failed in its task of providing tolerable conditions of life for the people in exchange for its own immunity from the control of government.

The common assertion that the English have a genius for government is entirely erroneous. But they have a genius for doing without a government, and that genius expressed itself characteristically in the contemptuous gesture which dismissed Mr. Lloyd George and put Mr. Baldwin in his place. It was thus on the strength of the mere honesty and decency of a number of their supporters that the bourgeoisie were given a second chance. They have used it to expand and to pursue the experiment of State Capitalism (or Capitalist Democracy, as Professor Laski calls it), initiated by Mr. Lloyd George's Insurance Act of 1911.

The present Government is in no sense an emergency coalition. It is a genuine union of all the parties who believe in State Capitalism. The widest mutual concessions have been made in the sphere of imperial policy solely with a view to ensuring the continuance of domestic policy on lines already laid down. The essential principle of State Capitalism is the continued identification of the State with property in its characteristic form (today, big business and the banks), at the price of a guarantee to the propertyless of a fixed dividend in goods and services, which shall form a small proportion, a large proportion, or one hundred percent of their total income, in inverse ratio to their skill, energy, and good fortune.

It was this system which was saved, and, as some think, stabilized, by the *coup d'état* of 1931 which led to the formation of the National Government. It is a system which commends itself to a decreasing majority of the English people because it preserves the identity of property with government while indulging the national good temper and sympathy for the under-dog. It is interesting and important to note that this system invariably demands—as governing classes always do, and "big business" is no exception—a price for their assistance to agriculture or competitive industry. At all costs monopolies must be forced into being and State control accepted before financial assistance is forthcoming. The bankers, who do not yet control the State, will yet only lend on the taxpayers' security. They learnt their power in 1931 and they will use it.

The defects of State Capitalism as a political system are two. In the first place, it is workable under democracy only as long as there is a government representing or sympathetic to property in its modern form (a government of small business men or landlords would be as fatal to its smooth operation as a proletarian government).* In the second place, State Capitalism needs for its stability an age of rising prices. A system which commits the State and the local authorities to a vast burden of annual expenditure fixed in terms of money, whether for loan charges on capital expenditure for services such as housing, public health, and education, or for salaries and insurance and other cash benefits to the electors, is inevitably confronted with a crisis during any prolonged period of falling prices. The events which led up to the political crisis of 1931 were, no doubt, exceptional in their severity; the facts that the depression was world-wide and that the State had to face not only the burden of those social and other services inherent in State Capitalism, but also the burden of a vast war debt, must not be overlooked. It remains true nevertheless that there was no reason whatever to anticipate, under the monetary system deliberately reinstated all over the world after the War, anything but a fall in prices, and that even if such a fall had not been aggravated by debts, reparations, and world-wide political and military disorder and unrest, it would still have remained as a severe, and quite possibly a fatal, threat to the whole conception of State Capitalism.

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* Hence the persistent refusal of modern plutocracy to reform and therefore to revitalize the House of Lords.

It is this inherent instability in the very structure of the British post-War system which has led the banks to insist at every turn on State intervention. Subsidies, tariffs, compulsory amalgamations, semi-socialized combines and commissions operating under state guarantees—such things are not the products of any coherent new theory of economics or statecraft; they are, on the admission of such theoretic Free Traders as Mr. Runciman, such old-fashioned Liberal-individualists as Mr. Baldwin, and such young Tories as Mr. Walter Elliot (who is regarded by many as the future Conservative leader), measures of desperate practical necessity. Without them, money cannot be borrowed. But the public must not be told the truth, and so, as these measures fail, or, at best, only partially succeed, there grows up behind all the false partisan announcements, such as that "the tide is turning" on the one hand, and that "nothing is being done" on the other, a professed conviction on the part of many thousands of people of all parties, that more and more organization, and more and more planning, is an urgent national necessity. This fantastic belief is a reflection of our ignorance of the real factors at work, of our profound pessimism and of our loss of faith in ourselves. Most of the people who advocate "national planning" would be incapable of running a tiny shop without going bankrupt in six months, but this does not mean that they are insincere. Their conviction of the need for "national planning" is but the reflex of their inner conviction of their own incompetence.

It is this widespread self-distrust, fostered inevitably by oppressive taxation and by a world situation making trade impossible, which is the cause of the growing discontent with the present government. It is a discontent which is carefully fostered, though for very different ends, by three political groups: the official Socialist Opposition; the Revolutionary Socialists of the Left Wing of the Labour Party and the Communists; and the Authoritarian group on the Right of the Conservative Party, whose objective may be defined as the Ethical State. These three groups are all opposed to State Capitalism, but in different degrees and on different grounds.

The official Socialist Opposition is the least opposed to it. Many of its members, like Mr. Arthur Henderson, have a personal rather than a political dislike of the present Government, and the complaint of most of the others is only that it works too slowly and over too narrow a field. Those who hold this belief merge, through an infinity of gradations, with the Revolutionary Socialists, whose ideology is frankly egalitarian. Their most powerful advocate in the House of Commons is Mr. Maxton; in the schools, Professor Laski; in the country, Poverty. But the fact remains that their argument today is largely an appeal to prejudice, because that part of the Socialist case which rests on the need for centralization, planning, coordination, rationalization, et cetera, has been weakened in its appeal through its adoption by the National State Capitalist Coalition. It is true that Socialists of all schools talk of the evil housing conditions, of the miserable pittance given to the unemployed, and of the theoretic iniquity of production for profit. There is also much platform talk of the idleness and luxury of the leisured class. These things have an appeal, but men and women listen to them with a divided heart, for what is uppermost in their minds is not the maldistribution of the profits of the wealth-producing machine but its patent failure to produce any wealth at all. With the best will in the world you cannot distribute a loss. Moreover the railwayman, the post-office worker, and the school teacher, all of whom are already state servants or servants of semi-socialized organizations, are as discontented as the miner, the builder's labourer, and the skilled artisan. All alike are faced with reduction of wages, insecurity of tenure, constant retrenchments. It is inevitable that their minds should be seeking the cause of all these things, and they are not unlikely to find it in the wide extension of the policies of subsidy, enforced amalgamation, and high taxation which they associate with the period of intense depression. In so far as the present Government policy fails, the reaction may well be *away from* rather than towards State interference.

Even the appeal to envy may prove double edged. Not only are the rewards of business enterprise disappearing at a very rapid rate, but the financial rewards of the great Trades Union leaders, be they "red", "pink", or "true blue", are very considerable, and have not passed unnoticed, while the effect of the partial socialization of our economic system has been to create simultaneously a new professional class of successful bureaucrats, semi-professional co-ordinators and planners with official titles and large salaries. Moreover, the secession to the ranks of the National Government of so many trusted Socialist leaders has bred a very deep distrust among the poor of all classes of the sincerity of Socialist leaders as a whole. Ground down by the weight of taxation, the small employers and the employees outside the powerful political unions (and both are in a large majority over their fellows) are increasingly likely to make common cause against the common enemy—the small man in the big job—just as the regimental officers and the men of the British Army did against the Staff during the War.* Old-fashioned Socialists like Mr. George Lansbury, the present leader of the Opposition, and academic Socialists like Dr. Hugh Dalton of the London School of Economics, Mr. G. D. H. Cole, the ablest economist in the party, and Mr. R. H. Tawney, the most earnest egalitarian, seem strangely unaware of these facts. They continue to talk of a governing class when they themselves have been the governing class twice in the last ten years; they continue to talk of the iniquity of profits in a world gone bankrupt; and, strangest of all, they continue to talk of the failure of private enterprise when they ought to be discussing the failure of the twenty-two years' régime of State Capitalism.

For, so far, State Capitalism has definitely failed. It has aggravated unemployment in its efforts to lower prices: it has failed to spread the benefits of its deflationary policy beyond the ranks of the sheltered classes of industry, even during its best days, and the crisis of 1931 was merely the logical consequence of an inherent incompatibility between the policy of the

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* It was, of course, this fact, so characteristic of our political realism, which prevented any serious revolt against discipline in the British Army between 1914 and 1918.

Bank of England and the State Capitalist politicians. This incompatibility was an equally unpleasant discovery for both parties. Mr. Montagu Norman had forced deflation on the Treasury in the teeth of the opposition of Mr. Reginald McKenna, the most academically distinguished of the Chairmen of the Joint Stock Banks, and Mr. J. M. Keynes, the most politically minded of the economists. Mr. Norman's belief, shared rather grudgingly by the Treasury officials, was that England must meet her debt to America or forfeit her financial supremacy, that this involved, (and here, and here alone, events have proved him right) a return to gold at the pre-War parity, and that the inevitable accompaniments to this return to the old parity—bankruptcies, reductions of capital, and wage reductions—were a necessary evil. Least said, it was felt, soonest mended.

Mr. Norman forgot two things. In the first place, universal suffrage involves a Labour government as the necessary consequence of wage reductions; in the second place, State Capitalism, except in a world of rising prices, spells bankruptcy. The reason for this is that State Capitalism has to declare a dividend in advance of earning it. What should be regarded as a distribution out of profits has to be regarded, and paid, as a prior charge on the proceeds of industry. Irrespective of the rise and fall in the national income, public faith is pledged to the payment of vast and ever-increasing sums out of income, and to an equally continuous volume of non-productive capital expenditure. That the Bank of England, to some extent, was aware of this is probable. That the City of London on the whole, however, was unprepared for the crisis, is absolutely certain, for even today the financiers seem quite unaware of its real significance. They still talk of the need for "healthy bankruptcies", "squeezing out the water", and all the necessary but painful aftermaths of deflation, and still trust to a rise in world prices which they do nothing to induce, to bring our national income into relation with our national and local obligations. This is a day dream. State Capitalism demands, as Professor Laski has acutely observed, a continuously expanding distribution of benefits. The system is inherently incompatible with a prolonged period of depression, when one half of the nation is condemned to unemployment and the other to overtaxation. The incompatibility is economic as well as political. There can be no question of a "recovery", however gradual, along these lines. If an attempt is made to balance the Budget, while nothing is done to raise the internal price level, the attempt will fail. If no attempt is made, the whole aim of the policy, the restoration of British financial supremacy on the basis of the existing valuation of sterling, will fail.

It is here that Mr. Keynes steps in, with the approval of the *Times*, and urges a world-wide system of reflation, which will, it is hoped, result in a general rise in prices and so cure the depression at home without ruining our export trade through raising the relative price of our manufactures broad. This too is a day dream for it fails altogether to explain how State Capitalism can meet the challenge of countries with a far lower standard of living. There is more logic, if less practicality, in the views of old-fashioned liberals like Mr. H. G. Wells or Sir Herbert Samuel, who realize that a planned economy based on export trade means, for Great Britain, either the abandonment of State Capitalism or a rise in labour and overhead charges all over the rest of the world. From this point the logical liberal is led to demand a plan not only for England, for Europe, or for the Empire, but for the whole world. This dream flatters the imagination of dons who see much scope for their activities in a world where nothing could be done without the preparation of exhaustive memoranda. It also appeals to all who, by reason of their race or their psychological bias, are internationalist in sympathy, and who look forward to the day when no Englishman will be able to buy a cabbage without a permit from Geneva or Moscow. But to the man in the street, this utterly futile and visionary talk does not appeal at all, and for this reason the parliamentary Liberal Party is condemned to permanent sterility.

State Capitalism will be saved neither by Mr. Keynes with his world reflation, nor by the Liberal Party with their world organization. It will be saved, if at all, by the adoption of an expansionist currency policy within the framework of a protectionist economy, based on a clear-cut policy of economic nationalism.

The ideology behind the English protectionist movement dates back to Disraeli, who in a striking speech prophesied the inevitable collapse of an economic system based on the export of manufactures. "You announce", he said, "your object to be the monopoly of the commerce of the universe; to make this country the workshop of the world. Believe me, I speak not as your enemy when I say that it will be an exception to the laws which have governed society if you maintain for long the success you aim at without the permanence of stability afforded by the territorial principle and agriculture." Joseph Chamberlain, the parent of modern protection in England, was similarly actuated by motives not wholly economic. Economic nationalism is, indeed, a misnomer as applied to English protectionism in its most vital form. Our most systematic advocate of protection today is Mr. L. S. Amery, and he, like his famous master Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, rests much of his case on the need for protecting not industry as such but essential social institutions and political relationships—a healthy balance, for instance, between town and country, and a more intimate relationship between Great Britain, the Dominions, and the Colonies.

The intellectual appeal of such arguments to the modern mind is still fairly strong, but it is blurred by the necessity recently experienced of introducing protection for wholly different reasons, namely, to reduce an unfavourable trade balance and to produce revenue. Behind protection as it is being applied in England today there is no ethical motive, there is hardly even, in the true sense of the term, a political motive. It is of a piece with the whole fabric of English State Capitalism, a makeshift designed to tide us over "till something turns up".

It is inevitable in these circumstances that protection, since it has become merely another governmental expedient, should have to some extent lost its intellectual and moral appeal. The omission of Mr. Amery from the present National Government was indeed in no sense accidental. The Government, though the first to introduce protection in this country for the best part of one hundred years, is in no sense a protectionist Government, and the protectionists proper are, like the Socialist opposition, likely to suffer by having their thunder stolen, and, as they would say, misused, by the present administration. Nevertheless it is only within the framework of an economic nationalism properly conceived and courageously conducted that State Capitalism could possibly endure. To talk of the organization of the whole world is merely midsummer madness. But the organization of suitable areas to be self-supporting in all essentials is possible where there is a sufficient harmony of race, creed, or culture, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's dream, now Mr. Amery's, of a self-supporting British Empire is at least a possibility. Such a self-contained economic unit could, so its champions hold, snap its fingers at the competition of low-paid Eastern and Near-Eastern labour, and it could also, which is far more important, afford to adopt an expansionist currency policy which would raise sterling prices irrespective of any rise in gold prices.

For such a currency policy there is an increasing volume of support. Some, like Sir Robert Horne and Mr. Amery himself, favour a bi-metallic standard. Some, like Mr. Reginald McKenna, consider the standard a matter for each country to choose for itself, but are emphatic in insisting that currency management must be subordinated to the needs of industry. Others, like Sir Basil Blackett, formerly Controller of Finance at the Treasury, then Financial Member of the Council in India, and now a Director of the Bank of England, are in favour of a managed currency so as to secure stability in the internal price level rather than in the rate of exchange.*

The influence both of the genuine protectionists and of the currency expansionists will probably grow by reason of the straits of State Capitalism. Currency expansion of one kind or another is bound to come, and protection will be applied increasingly. It is, however, very unlikely that any such self-supporting economic unit as Mr. Amery would like to see, and which would in fact be necessary to support such a complex and unnatural system as State Capitalism, will ever come into being. The opposition in the Dominions, and particularly in Canada, is far too strong. Much will be done to strengthen existing relationships, but ultimately the Dominions will carve out their own paths and manufacture their own requirements when it suits them, and Great Britain in turn will be driven to develop her agriculture. Political plans will never master the feeling of nationality in young and virile peoples.

There are other reasons which compel us with equal force to the conclusion that State Capitalism, though it might and in a different kind of world could be saved by economic imperialism and currency reflation, is in fact an abortive experiment. It is contrary not only to human nature in the British Dominions but to human nature in Great Britain. The reorganization of our national life which it would entail could not even be attempted by the present House of Commons, which is quite unfitted even to discuss monetary policy or to predetermine the lines of industrial and agriculture reorganization. Neither of these essentials of a working system of State Capitalism can be provided except by an executive armed with dictatorial powers, and such powers will never be adequately exercised in favour of a compromise system which does not fully satisfy the idealism either of the egalitarian, the Marxian Socialist, or the Conservative social reformer. The public in its present mood would perhaps be impressed by any plan however grandiose. But the terrific responsibility which would fall to the lot of any statesman who deliberately set himself to create the conditions in which alone State Capitalism could survive, would be a burden which no one not activated by a quasi-religious faith could possibly sustain.

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* See Sir Basil Blackett's *Planned Money.*

State Capitalism has got as far as it has done because it has evolved a series of expedients directed to preserving a system in being. It has been, not a great task of reconstruction, but a *pis aller* for the timid. Almost certainly the future does not lie with State Capitalism because, by the facts of its origin, it has no ideology sufficiently vital to sustain it. And in and by its failure it will, again almost certainly, for the reasons given, bring down Socialism with it. This is not a logical necessity but it is an almost certain political consequence. State Capitalism will potter and potter, and meddle and subsidize and supervise. It will intensify the prejudice against state inefficiency and state interference, which has its origin in the fundamental distrust of all individuals for any government, and particularly of Englishmen with their long tradition of liberty. The reaction will almost certainly take other forms; the public will continue to demand a "plan", but it will begin, and perhaps very soon, to demand a "plan" within which private enterprise can flourish with due regard to human dignity.

And here we return to where we began, for it is at this point in the argument of history that England is so fatally handicapped by her past. The reason why the Italian experiment has been so ludicrously misunderstood in England is because the English cannot understand that conception of government not *between* but *above* Capital and Labour which is fundamental to the Corporate State. Since the days of Charles I we have never had a government in England; we have only had a succession of governing classes. We have never had an aristocracy, we have only had a succession of ennobled *arrivistes*. We have no *droit administratif*, we have not even a *droit de seigneur*. We have no *ancien régime*; we have not even a façade behind which we can erect the machinery of the authoritarian state. Mr. Austin Hopkinson's dream of an aristocracy of industry denying themselves all financial benefit from their leadership remains a dream.

Yet the twin hungers of the British people for Justice and Liberty must be appeased.

For this reason, though with small hope of any very early re-awakening of the national energies, I prophesy the ultimate cure of our troubles in an Anglo-Saxon version of the Ethical State. It will be based on the Tory tradition, which has remained far less influenced by the ideology of "big business" than either the Liberal or the Labour parties, and which has retained to this day something of the independent tradition of the Squirearchy which was killed by Sir Robert Peel in the teeth of the protests of the youthful Disraeli.

It will satisfy the English habit of self-government by making industry autonomous instead of industrializing the national government. It will satisfy the English temper by preferring justice to equality and liberty to an enforced order. It will meet the demand for a plan by creating institutions in the place of organizations, and the belief in progress by substituting, for the increased taxation of wealth, the incremental growth of institutions rooted in social justice as the foundation of popular prosperity.

This lies doubtless in the future. Today, it is perhaps only a dream. But it is a dream which can pin itself to one reality too often ignored by political parties, the British Monarchy, which shares with the Papacy the distinction of being the only European institution which has continued to exercise authority and to exact respect for a thousand years. It will certainly remain, and it will rally to its support, not merely the individualist Liberals—a growing body with an influence disproportionate to their numbers—but the bulk of the younger generation, excluding only the Revolutionary Socialists, with whom the issue will ultimately be contested.

In an address to the *English Review* Luncheon Club on March 22nd, Mr. W. S. Morrison, M.P., one of the leading representatives in Parliament of the new Conservatism, and, significantly enough, regarded nevertheless as a man destined to high office, sketched the broad principles on which the new movement would base the necessary national reconstruction. Fundamentally, he defined the problem as one of substituting a basis of status for the purely contractual, and therefore selfish, bases of contemporary urban civilization. He challenged the fashionable modern idea that the principal good to be sought is increased leisure. Instead, he urged that the true aim was a life of increased amenities, among which liberty, an ownership of property, the integrity of the family, and the maximum of independence must be reckoned far more necessary to human happiness than leisure and material goods. It was, he urged, the denial of spiritual satisfaction that was fatal to the claims of rationalization and state socialism alike to provide any solution to the contemporary problem.

Such an argument derives from many sources. The philosophy of property is mediaeval in its origin; it derives much of its steadily growing popularity today from the early efforts of the pre-War Guild Socialists, and still more to the leaders of the revival of Catholic political thought in England, Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton among the older generation, and Mr. Christopher Dawson, *facile princeps* among the post-War writers and teachers. The preference for the static conception of society can be traced to Edmund Burke, while Mr. Morrison himself, in his repudiation of the different contractual theories of society, invoked the authority of Dr. Johnson.

In the stress which its program lays on the superiority of social to economic values, the new Conservatism follows, and derives great weight from, the protectionists, though its scale of social values may be somewhat different. The challenge of both to Marxianism and State Capitalism alike is, however, fundamental. And for this reason it is not fantastic to trace in this formulation of principles the influence also of a superficially hostile force—Liberal Individualism.

The Individualist Movement, led by Sir Ernest Benn, would certainly deny any sympathy with the conception of the authoritarian or ethical state. But they were pioneers, in the post-War politics of England, in asserting many of its fundamental values, and in particular in challenging not merely the ability but the right of the State to tell the individual what he should eat and wherewith he should be clothed. These needs, say the Individualists, will be supplied if we follow the Christian injunction and be not too solicitous about them. They will supply themselves in a natural society which does not thwart, in the foolish attempt to "organize" an improvement, all the natural incentives to energy and prudence which are to be found in the natural social institutions, the family, private property, and the State. These ideas, which form the main inspiration of the Individualist group, have dynamic force because they correspond to profound human instincts. They have suffered political eclipse by their association, far from necessary in logic and fatal in practice, with the extremer version of *laissez faire* economics.

Whether our recovery is fairly rapid and continuous, or infinitely slow and subjected to innumerable set-backs, will depend on whether the rather flimsy alliance between the Authoritarians, the new Conservatives, and the Individualists, as exemplified at present, for instance, in the *English Review* Group, where all these schools of thought are fully and powerfully represented, can be made politically effective. Today nothing but a fearless application of State authority, and as uncompromising an assertion of State right as has been made in Italy, and, but yesterday, in the United States, can rebuild the conditions in which a widely distributed system of private ownership can be re-established. Nor, without State action of the most forceful kind, can the proper balance between town and country be re-established, a balance which is proving, as Disraeli long since prophesied, indispensable to social order and human dignity.

It is only an alliance between the Individualists and the Authoritarians that can provide a means, within the near future, for reconciling the two most fundamental passions of the English people, the passion for Liberty and the passion for Order—the desire for Status and the desire for Freedom. To effect this reconciliation, to provide for this realization, is the hope of more than one powerful group of English opinion today. These groups, outside the organized political parties, are growing in influence. If and when they consolidate their forces, their influence will certainly prevail. If not, the future lies with Revolutionary Socialism, and the dust will settle on the remains of yet another once hopeful experiment in political liberty.

A Poem Nearly Anonymous

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

IT WAS published in 1638, and therefore I shall not pretend to be offering a fresh tidbit to the moderns; clearly a product of that darkness which preceded our incomparable modernity. Its origins were about as unlikely as they could be, since it was only one of the exhibits in a memorial garland, a common academic sort of volume. It appeared there without a title and signed only by a pair of initials, though now we know it both by a name and by an author. Often we choose absurdly to think of it as the work of a famous poet, which it was not; done by an apprentice of nearly thirty, who was still purifying his taste upon an astonishingly arduous diet of literary exercises; the fame which was to shine backwards upon this poem, and to be not very different from the fame which he steadily intended, being as distant as it was great. Unfortunately it is one of the poems we think we know best. Upon it is imposed the heavy weight of many perfect glosses, respecting its occasion, literary sources, classical and contemporary allusions, exhausting us certainly and exhausting, for a good many persons, the poem. But I am bound to consider that any triteness which comes to mind with mention of the poem is a property of our own registration, and does not affect its freshness, which is perennial. The poem is young, brilliant, insubordinate. In it is an artist who wrestles with an almost insuperable problem, and is kinsman to some tortured modern artists. It has much in common with, for example, *The Waste Land*, whose author as poet must be sympathetic even though, as critic, he might oblige himself to be censorious. In short, the poem is *Lycidas*.

A symbol is a great convenience in discussion, and therefore I will find one in the half-way *anonymity* of the poem; symbolic of the poet's admirable understanding of his art, and symbolic of the tradition that governed the art on the whole in one of its flourishing periods. Anonymity, of some real if not literal sort, is a condition of poetry. A good poem, even if it is signed with a full and well-known name, intends as a work of art to lose the identity of the author; that is, it means to represent him not actualized, like an eye-witness testifying in court and held strictly by zealous counsel to the point at issue, but freed from his juridical or prose self and taking an ideal or fictitious personality; otherwise his evidence amounts the less to poetry. Poets may go to universities and, if they take to education properly, increase greatly the stock of ideal selves into which they may pass for the purpose of being poetical. If on the other hand they insist too narrowly on their own identity and their own story, inspired by a simple but mistaken theory of art, they find their little fountains of poetry drying up within them. Milton set out to write a poem mourning a friend and poet who had died; in order to do it he became a Greek shepherd, mourning another one. It was not that sanctity or authority attached particularly to the discourse of a Greek shepherd; the Greek shepherd in his own person would have been hopeless; but Milton as a Greek shepherd was delivered from being Milton the scrivener's son, the Master of Arts from Cambridge, the handsome and finicky young man, and that was the point. In proceeding to his Master's degree he had made studies which, among other things, gave him dramatic insight into many parts foreign to his own personal experience; which was precisely the technical resource he had required the moment he determined to be a poet. Such a training was almost the regular and unremarked procedure with the poets of his time. Today young men and women, as noble as Milton, those in university circles as much as those out of them, try to become poets on another plan, and with rather less success. They write their autobiographies, following perhaps the example of Wordsworth, which on the whole was unfortunate for the prosperity of the art; or they write some of their intenser experiences, their loves, pities, griefs, and religious ecstasies; but too literally, faithfully, piously, ingenuously. They seem to want to do without wit and playfulness, dramatic sense, detachment, and it cuts them off from the practice of an art.

Briefly, it was Milton's intention to be always anonymous as a poet, rarely as a writer of prose. The poet must suppress the man, or the man would suppress the poet. What he wanted to say for himself, or for his principles, became eligible for poetry only when it became what the poet, the *dramatis persona* so to speak, might want to say for himself. The poet could not be directed to express faithfully and pointedly the man; nor was it for the sake of "expression" that the man abdicated in favour of the poet.

Strictly speaking, this may be a half-truth. But if we regard with a reformer's eye the present decay of poetry, it becomes almost the whole truth we are called to utter. I do not mind putting it flatly; nor drawing the conclusion that poetry appeared to the apprentice Milton, before it could appear anything else, and before it could come into proper existence at all, as a sort of exercise, very difficult, and at first sight rather beside the point. It was of course an exercise in pure linguistic technique, or metrics; it was also an exercise in the technique of what our critics of fiction refer to as "point of view". And probably we shall never find a better locus than *Lycidas* for exhibiting at once the poet and the man, the technique and the personal interest, bound up tightly and contending all but equally; the strain of contraries, the not quite resolvable dualism, that is art.

For we must begin with a remark quite unsuitable for those moderns to whom "expression" seems the essential quality of poetry. *Lycidas* is a literary exercise; and so is almost any other poem earlier than the eighteenth century; the craftsmanship, the formal quality which is written on it, is meant to have high visibility. Take elegy, for example. According to the gentle and extremely masculine tradition which once governed in these matters, performance is not rated by the rending of garments, heartbreak, verisimilitude of desolation. After all, an artist is standing before the public, and bears the character of a qualified spokesman, and a male. Let him somewhat loudly sweep the strings, even the tender human ones, but not without being almost military and superficial in his restraint; like the pomp at the funeral of the king, whom everybody mourns publicly and nobody privately. Milton made a great point of observing the proprieties of verse. He had told Diodati, as plainly as Latin elegiacs allowed, that "expression" was not one of the satisfactions which they permitted to the poet: "You want to know in verse how much I love and cherish you; believe me that you will scarcely discover this in verse, for love like ours is not contained within cold measures, it does not come to hobbled feet." As for memorial verse, he had already written, in English or in Latin, for the University beadle, the University carrier, the Vice-Chancellor, his niece the Fair Infant Dying of a Cough, the Marchioness of Winchester, the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishop of Ely; he was yet to write for his Diodati, and for Mrs. Katharine Thomason. All these poems are exercises, and some are very playful indeed. There is no great raw grief apparent ever, and sometimes, it is likely, no great grief. For Lycidas he mourns with a very technical piety.

Let us go directly to the poem's metre—though this feature may seem a bristling technicality, and the sort of thing the tender reader may think he ought to be spared. I do not wish to be brutal, but I am afraid that metre is fundamental in the problem posed to the artist as poet. During the long apprenticeship Milton was the experimentalist, trying nearly everything. He does not ordinarily, in the Minor Poems, repeat himself metrically; another poem means another metre, and the new metre will scarcely satisfy him any better than the last one did. Evidently Milton never found the metre in which as a highly individual poet he could feel easy, and to which he was prepared to entrust his serious work, until he had adopted the ragged blank verse of contemporary drama and done something to it; tightening it up into a medium which was hard enough to exhibit form, and plastic enough to give him freedom. In other words, it defined the poet, as somebody with a clipped, sonorous, figurative manner of speaking; but it also gave a possible utterance to the natural man. But that is another story. Here let us ask the question always in order against a Milton poem: What was the historic metrical pattern already before him, and what are the liberties he takes with it? For he does not cut patterns, so to speak, out of the whole cloth, but always takes an existing pattern; stretches it dangerously close to the limits that the pattern will permit without ceasing to be a pattern; and never brings himself to the point of defying that restraint which patterns inflict upon him, and composing something altogether unpatterned. That is to say, he tends habitually towards the formlessness which is modern, without quite caring to arrive at that destination. Now it is the principle we are interested in, not the literal answer to the question, which I will try to get over briefly.

The answer given by the Milton scholars, those who know their Italian, is that in this poem he made a very free adaptation of the canzone. This was a stanza of indeterminate length, running it might be to twenty lines or so; marked by some intricate rhyming scheme, and by a small number of six-syllable lines inserted among the ten-syllable lines which constituted the staple. The poet was free to make up his own stanza but, once that was given, had to keep it uniform throughout the poem. Milton employs it with almost destructive freedom, as we shall see. Yet, on the other hand, the correct stanza materials are there, and we can at least say that any one of the stanzas or paragraphs might make a passable canzone. And lest his irregularities be imputed to incompetence, we must observe the loving exactitude of his line-structure, that fundamental unit of any prosody, within the stanzas. He counts his syllables, he takes no liberties there: consisting with our rather fixed impression that he never in all his poetry admits an imperfect line.

The Milton scholars know their Italian, and have me at a disadvantage. Milton knew his Italian. But he also knew his Spenser, and knowing that, it seems unnecessary to inquire whether he knew his Italian too; for he had only to adopt a famous Spenserian stanza, and his acquaintance with the canzone becomes really immaterial. I imagine this point has a slight importance. It would have something to do with the problem of the English poet who wants to employ an English technique in addressing himself to an English public which can be expected to know its English formal tradition. Spenser anticipated Milton by employing the canzone effectively in at least two considerable poems; they were not elegies, but at least they were marriage hymns. In 1596 he published his *Prothalamion*, upon the occasion of a noble alliance; the stanzas are exactly uniform, and each is an admirable Italian canzone, with the signal exception of the last line, which has twelve syllables. But he had published in 1595 his *Epithalamion*, upon the occasion of his own wedding, which is much more to Milton's purpose, and ours. Here are ten eighteen-line stanzas, but here are also twelve nineteen-line stanzas, and one of seventeen lines; and one of the eighteen-line stanzas does not agree in pattern with the others. If these details escape the modern reader, it is not likely that they were missed by Spenser's public. The poetical consciousness of the aristocratic literati of that age was a state of mind having metrical form in its foreground, and Spenser intended frankly to make use of the fact. Probably he calculated that if they would go to pains to analyze a poem composed of intricate but orthodox canzoni, they would go to still greater pains to analyze a poem whose canzoni were subtly irregular; and the advantage to be reaped from going to such pains—it was their advantage as much as his—was the sort of addition to total aesthetic effect which a labour of love can furnish. A public like Spenser's participates in the poem as does the author, and it is unfortunate if there lives today some modern Spenser who cannot hope such a happiness for his efforts. But probably the sad truth is that a subtle art is unlikely in the first place, whose artist does not reckon upon the background of a severe technical tradition, and the prospect of a substantial public body of appreciation.

The enterprising Spenser prepared the way for the daring Milton, who remarks the liberties which his celebrated exemplar has taken and carries his own liberties farther, to a point just this side of anarchy. The eleven stanzas of *Lycidas* occupy one hundred and ninety-three lines, and have therefore an average length of a little over seventeen lines, but are grossly unequal and unlike. Such stanzas are not in strictness stanzas at all; Milton has all but scrapped the stanza as a formal or binding element. But there is perhaps an even more startling lapse. Within the whole poem are ten lines which do not rhyme at all, and which technically do not therefore belong in any stanza, nor in the poem.

Now we may well imagine that the unrhymed lines did not escape Milton's notice, and also that he did not mean nor hope that they should escape our notice. The opening line of the poem is unrhymed, which is fair warning. The ten unrhymed lines should be conspicuous among the one hundred and eighty-three rhymed lines, like so many bachelors in a company of fast-mated families. Let us ask what readers of *Lycidas* have detected them, and we shall see what readers are equipped with the right sensibility for an effect in form. And if the effect in this case is an effect of prose formlessness, and if nevertheless it is deliberate, we had better ask ourselves what Milton wanted with it.

It is tempting to the imperious individualism of the modern reader, especially if he has heard somewhere about the enormous egoism of John Milton, to say that the "expression" in these lines must have seemed to their author "inevitable", and superior to any obligation to the law of the form. Just as we find them, they had leapt out of the tense, creative fury of the poet, notable, possibly prophetic; and what higher considerations were there anywhere requiring him in cold blood to alter them? But that does not make sense as an account of the poetic processes of a Milton. The ten lines, as it happens, look at them as hard as we like, do not seem more important than any ten others, and are not the lines by which he could have set special store. As a matter of fact, he might have altered them easily, tinkering with them as long as necessary in order to bring them within the metre, and they would scarcely have been, by whatever standard, any the worse. So great is the suggestibility of the poet's mind, the associability of ideas, the infinite margin in the meaning of words. It is the inexperienced artist who attributes sanctity to some detail of his inspiration. You may ask him to write a poem which will make sense and make metre at the same time, but in the performance he will sacrifice one or the other; the consequence will be good sense and lame metre, or good metre and nonsense; if he is a man of interests and convictions, the former. But the competent artist is as sure of his second thoughts as of his first ones. In fact, surer, if anything; second thoughts tend to be the richer, for in order to get them he has to break up the obvious trains of association and explore more widely. Milton was not enamoured of the ten lines, and they stand out from their context by no peculiar quality of their own but only because they do not belong to it metrically. Therefore I would say that they constitute the gesture of his rebellion against the formalism of his art, but not the rebellion itself. They are defiances, showing the man unwilling to give way to the poet; they are not based upon a special issue but upon surliness, and general principles. It is a fateful moment. At this critical stage in the poet's career, when he has come to the end of the period of Minor Poems, and is turning over in his head the grand subjects out of which he will produce great poems, he is uneasy, sceptical, about the whole foundation of poetry as an art. He has a lordly contempt for its tedious formalities, and is determined to show what he can do with only half trying to attend to them. Or he thinks they are definitely bad, and proposes to see if it is not better to shove them aside.

In this uncertainty he is a modern poet. In the irregular stanzas and the rhymeless lines is registered the ravage of his modernity; it has bit into him as it never did into Spenser. And we imagine him thinking to himself, precisely like some modern poets we know, that he could not longer endure the look of perfect regimentation which sat upon the poor ideas objectified before him upon the page of poetry, as if that carried with it a reflection upon their sincerity. I will go further. It is not merely easy for the technician to write in smooth metres; it is perhaps easier than to write in rough ones, after he has once started; but when he has written smoothly, and contemplates his work, he is capable actually, if he is a modern poet, of going over it laboriously and roughening it. I venture to think that just such a practice, speaking very broadly, obtained in the composition of *Lycidas*; that it was written smooth and rewritten rough; which was treason.

An art never possesses the "sincerity" that consists in speaking one's mind—in expressing one's first impression before it has time to grow cold. This sincerity is spontaneity, the most characteristic quality in modern poetry. Art is long, and time is fleeting, and we have grown too impatient to relish more than the first motions towards poetic effect. The English and American Imagists exploited and consolidated this temper, which was no longer hospitable to a finished art. In their defence it may be said with justice that the writing of formal poetry, which they interrupted, was becoming a tedious parlour performance in which the poet made much ado about saying nothing of importance, while the man behind him quite escaped acquaintance through sheer lack of force. The vers-librists were determined to be bright, and fresh, and innocent of deep and ulterior designs; but their prose art was an anomaly. It wore out, and strict artistic economy has had a certain recovery; nothing like a complete one, however, more like one of those up-swings that only partially relieve a basic depression in our business economy.

It depends ultimately on taste whether we prefer prose to poetry, or prefer even a mixture of prose and poetry. Let us suppose two gentlemen talking a little wildly over their cups, until Mr. A insults Mr. B. Now if B is a modern man, he immediately strikes A down, with his knife if it happens to be in his hand, or his stick, or his fist. He has acted spontaneously, with a right and quick instinct, and he is admired for it. (I do not mean to raise any moral issues with my analogy.) But if the time is about a century or two earlier, B steps back and says drily: "My seconds will wait upon you, Sir." The next dawn A and B repair to the grove, attended by their respective partisans, draw their rapiers, and with great ceremony set in to kill each other. Or apparently they do; but if they are not really prepared to be hurt, nor to hurt each other, but are only passing the time until they are informed that their honours are satisfied, it is a bogus and ineffective action and the serious spectators feel cheated; that represents the sort of art against which the free versifiers revolted. If they fight till A puts his steel through the vitals of B, or *vice versa*, the spectators are well rewarded, and the ceremonial has justified itself, though it took time; that stands for the true art. But if they lose their tempers on the field and begin to curse, and kick, and throw stones and clods at each other, they are behaving too spontaneously for a formal occasion. Why were they not spontaneous yesterday if that was their intention? They will have to be recalled to the occasion and come to a conclusion under the terms nominated; and here we have the mixed affair of poetry and prose, a problem in taste; here, I am afraid, we have *Lycidas*.

At any rate Milton thought something of the kind. For he never repeated his bold experiment; and he felt at the time that it was an unsuccessful experiment. The last stanzas become much more patterned, and in the postscript Milton refers to the whole monody as the song of an "uncouth Swain", who has been "with eager thought warbling his *Dorick* lay". That is descriptive and deprecatory.

There is another possibility. Milton had much of the modern poet's awareness of his public; in this case the awareness of a public not quite capable of his own sustained artistic detachment. What sort of poem would it like? Too perfect an art might look cold and dead; and though an elegy had to be about the dead, it did not itself want to look dead, but to display incessant energy. So he read the formal poem he had written, and deformed it; or he had read other formal poems, like the *Epithalamion*, and remarked that the public, an increasingly mixed lot, thought them a little dull, and he now, as he composed, remembered to write into his own poem plenty of formlessness. "The formalism," he was thinking, "if unrelieved, will dull the perceptions of the reader, and unprepare him for my surprises, and my tireless fertility. Therefore let him sense an exciting combat between the artist and the man, and let the man interrupt with his prose (or comparative prose) the pretty passages of the artist." In that case the artist was only pretending to give way to the man, calculating with the cunning of a psychologist, perhaps of a dramatist, and violating the law of his art entirely for its public effect; a Jesuit of an artist. But the Jesuit, according to the Protestant tradition which reaches me, and which I will trust to the extent of this argument, has an excessive respect for the depravity of the humanity he ministers to, and he needs beyond other priests to be firmly grounded in his principles, lest from fighting the devil with fire he change his own element insensibly, become himself a fallen angel, and bear the reputation of one. The best thing to say for Milton is that his principles were strong, and he did not again so flagrantly betray them.

But if the poem is a literary exercise, it does not consist only in a game of metrical hide-and-seek, played between the long lines and short lines, the rhymed and unrhymed. It is also a poem in a certain literary "type", with conventions of subject-matter and style. Milton set out to make it a pastoral elegy, and felt honour-bound to use the conventions which had developed in the pastoral elegies of the Greeks, of Virgil, of the Italians, of Spenser; possibly of the French. The course of the poem in outline therefore is not highly "creative", but rather commonplace and in order, when the dead shepherd is remembered and his virtues published; when nature is made to lament him, and the streams to dry up in sympathy; when the guardian nymphs are asked why they have not saved him; when the untimeliness of his doom is moralized; when the corrupt church is reproached; when the flowers are gathered for the hearse; and finally when it appears to the mourners that they must cease, since he is not dead, but translated into a higher region, where he lives in bliss of a not definitive sort. In the pastoral elegy at large one of my friends distinguishes eleven different topics of discourse, and points out that Milton, for doubtless the first time in this literature, manages to "drag them all into one poem"; a distinction for him, though perhaps a doubtful one. But in doing so he simply fills up the poem; there are no other topics in it. And where then is Milton the individualist, whose metrical departures would seem to have advertised a performance which in some to-be-unfolded manner will be revolutionary?

When we attempt to define the poetic "quality" of this poet's performances, we are forced to confess that it consists largely in pure eclecticism; here is a poet who can simply lay more of his predecessors under tribute than another. This is not to deny, of course, that he does a good job of it. He assimilates what he receives, and adapts it infallibly to the business in hand, where scraps fuse into the integer, and the awkward articulations cannot be detected. His second-hand effects are not as good as new but better; the features of pastoral elegy are not as pretty in *Lycidas* as they were in Moschus, or Virgil, or Spenser, but prettier; though generically, and even in considerable detail, the same features. We remember after all that Milton intended his effects; and among others, this one of indebtedness to models. He expected that the reader should observe his eclecticism, he was scarcely alarmed lest it be mistaken for plagiarism. It is because of something mean and blatant in our modernism, or at least in that of our critics, that we, if we had composed the poem, would have found such an expectancy tainted with such an alarm. Like all the artists of the Renaissance, Milton hankered honestly after "Fame"; but he was not infected with our gross modern concept of "originality". The aesthetic of this point is perfectly rational. If a whole series of artists in turn develop the same subject, it is to the last one's advantage that he may absorb the others, in addition to being in whatever pointed or subtle manner his own specific self. His work becomes the climax of a tradition, and is better than the work of an earlier artist in the series. Unfortunately, there will come perhaps the effete day when there is no artist prepared to carry on the tradition; or more simply, if we prefer, the day when the tradition has gone far enough and is not worth carrying further; that is, when it is worn out as a "heuristic principle", and confines instead of freeing the spirit. (Very few pastoral elegies can have been written since *Lycidas* in our language; very few critics can have deplored this.) On that day the art will need its revolutionist, to start another tradition. It is a bold step for the artist to take, and Milton did not think it needful to take it here. The revolutionist who does not succeed must descend to the rating, for history, of rebel; the fool of a wrong political intuition.

But revolutions, for all that, little and private ones if not big and general ones, come frequently into a healthy literary history, in which variety is a matter of course. The poet may do better with a make-believe of his own than with the time-honoured one. There is no theoretical limit upon the variety of literary types, and each good type permits of many explorers, but tends at last to be exhausted. The point of view of Greek shepherds, as romantic innocents and rustics, is excellent, and offers a wide range of poetic discourse concerning friendship, love, nature, and even, a startling innovation of the Italian pastoralists, the "ruin of the clergy". The point of view of the amorous cavalier presenting his compliments and reproaches to his lady is also a good one; it ran through many hundreds of lyrics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and is still better than no point of view at all, which we find in some young poet brashly speaking in his own person to his own love. The studied "conceit" of the seventeenth century offered another field of discourse in which poetic exercises took place; logical and academic, but having rich possibilities, and eligible even for religious experiences. The sonnet is primarily a metrical form, but behind it distinctly there is an ideal and rather formidable speaker, far from actual; the man who resorts to sonnets for utterance suffers repressions and transmogrifications. The ballad offers a point of view quite alien to the average cultivated poet, because speaking in that form he must divest himself of the impedimenta of learning and go primitive. All these forms lend themselves to individual variations and innovations; call for them, in fact, in the course of time, when the poet can find no fresh experience within the usual thing. It is entirely according to the aesthetic of this art if a poet wants to enter the book of literature with a series of Choctaw Indian ballads, provided he is steeped in the Choctaw mode of experience and able to make a substantial exhibit; or with a set of poems from the character of a mere Shropshire lad; or from that of a dry New England countryman. It is important mostly that the poet know his part and speak it fluently.

Of Milton's "style", in the sense of beauty of sound, imagery, syntax and dystax, idiom, I shall not undertake to be very analytic. It is a grand style; which is to say, I suppose, that it is *the* grand style, probably the only kind of grand style that English poets have known: the style produced out of the poet's remembrance of his classical models, chiefly Virgil. Milton has not been the only English poet to learn from Virgil, but he is doubtless the one who learned the most. Until the nineteenth century Virgil was perhaps the greatest external influence upon English literature. Dryden venerated but could not translate him:

> . . . must confess to my shame, that I have not been able to Translate any part of him so well, as to make him appear wholly like himself. For where the Original is close, no Version can reach it in the same compass. Hannibal Caro's, in the Italian, is the nearest, the most Poetical, and the most Sonorous of any Translation of the Aeneid's: yet, though he takes the advantage of blank Verse, he commonly allows two lines for one of Virgil, and does not always hit his sence. . . . Virgil, therefore, being so very sparing of his words, and leaving so much to be imagined by the Reader, can never be translated as he ought, in any modern Tongue. To make him Copious, is to alter his Character; and to translate him Line for Line is impossible; because the Latin is naturally a more succinct Language than either the Italian, Spanish, French, or even than the English (which, by reason of its Monosyllables, is far the most compendious of them). Virgil is much the closest of any Roman Poet, and the Latin Hexameter has more Feet than the English Heroick.

But in spite of the unfitness of an uninflected language like English, poets have occasionally managed a Virgilian style in it. We think at once of Marlowe. Naturally it was not entirely beyond Shakespeare's powers; but Shakespeare at his highest pitch likes to rely on fury and hyperbole rather than the "smoothness" and "majesty" which Dryden commends in Virgil. Shakespeare writes:

> Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! Spout, rain!

and

> You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
> Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
> Singe my white head!

which is in a sublime style but not, if we care to be precise, the grand style. But Milton very nearly commanded this style. And with reason; for he had written Minor Poems in Latin as well as Minor Poems in English, and they were perhaps the more important item in his apprenticeship. This is one of the consequences:

> But now my Oate proceeds,
> And listens to the Herald of the Sea,
> That came in *Neptune's* plea,
> He ask'd the Waves, and ask'd the Fellon winds,
> What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?
> And question'd every gust of rugged wings
> That blows from off each beaked Promontory,
> They knew not of his story,
> And sage *Hippotades* their answer brings,
> That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd,
> The Ayr was calm, and on the level brine,
> Sleek *Panope* with all her sisters play'd.

It was that fatall and perfidious Bark
Built in th'eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

It is probably conceded that no other English poet has this mastery of the Virgilian effect. Milton had simply learned to know it in the Latin—learning by the long way of performance as well as by the short way of observation—and then transferred it to his native English; where it becomes indeed a heightened effect, because this language is not accustomed at once to ease and condensation like this, and there is little competition. The great repute of the Miltonic style in our literature is a consequence of the scarcity of Miltons; that is, of poets who have mastered the technique of Latin poetry before they have turned to their own.

But the author of *Lycidas*, attended into his project by so much of the baggage of tradition, cannot, by a universal modern way of thinking, have felt, exactly, free. I shall risk saying he was not free. Little chance there for him to express the interests, the causes, which he was very personally and very powerfully developing; the poem too occasional and too formal entirely for that. Of course the occasion was a fundamental one, it was no less than Death; and there are no persons so aggressive and self-assured but they must come to terms with that occasion. But a philosophy of death seems mostly to nullify, with its irony, the philosophy of life. Milton was yet very much alive, and in fact he regarded himself as having scarcely begun to live. The poem is almost wasted if we are seeking to determine to what extent it permitted Milton to express his heart.

But not quite. The passage on mortality is tense; Professor Tillyard finds the man in it. It goes into a passage on the immortality of the just man's Fame, which gives Milton's Platonic version of Puritanism. More important perhaps is the kind of expressiveness which appears in the speech of Peter. The freedom with which Milton abuses the false shepherds surpasses anything which his predecessors in this vein had indulged. He drops his Latinity for plain speech, where he can express a Milton who is angry, violent, and perhaps a little bit obscene. It is the first time in his career that we have seen in him a taste for writing at this level. With modern readers it may be greatly to his credit as a natural man that he can feel strongly and hit hard. Later, in the period of his controversial prose, we get more of the same, until we have had quite enough of this natural man. In the *Paradise Lost* we will get some "strong" passages again, but they are not Milton's immediate response to his own situation, they are dramatically appropriate, and the persons and scenes of the drama are remote enough to bring the passages safely under the precise head of "art"; more safely perhaps than, for example, many passages in Dante. And this may be thought true of the passage in *Lycidas*; it is Peter speaking in a pastoral part, and Peter's villains are still shepherds; though he sounds like another Puritan zealot, distinctly less than apostolic.

Before I offer some generalizations about the poet and his art, I wish to refer, finally, to one feature of *Lycidas* which critics have rarely mentioned, and which most readers of my acquaintance, I believe, have never noticed, but which is technically astonishing all the same, and ought to initiate an important speculation upon the intentions of this poet. Pastoral elegies are dramatic monologues, giving the words of a single shepherd upon a single occasion; or they are dialogues giving, like so much printed drama, the speeches of several shepherds in a single scene. They may have prologues, perhaps so denominated in the text, and printed in italics, or in a body separate from the elegy proper; and likewise epilogues; the prologues and epilogues being the author's envelope of narrative within which is inserted the elegy. The composition is straightforward and explicitly logical.

Milton's elegy is otherwise. It begins without preamble as a monologue, and continues so through the former and bitterer half of the passage on Fame:

> But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
> And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
> Comes the blind *Fury* with th'abhorred shears,
> And slits the thin spun life. . . .

At this point comes an incredible interpolation:

> . . . But not the praise,
> *Phoebus* repli'd, and touch'd my trembling ears . . .

And Phoebus concludes the stanza; after which the shepherd apologizes to his pastoral Muses for the interruption and proceeds with his monologue. But dramatic monologue has turned for a moment into narrative. The narrative breaks the monologue several times more, presenting action sometimes in the present tense, sometimes in the past. And the final stanza gives a pure narrative conclusion in the past, without the typographical separateness of an epilogue; it is the one which contains Milton's apology for the "Dorick" quality of his performance, and promises that the author will yet appear in a serious and mature light as he has scarcely done on this occasion.

Such a breach of the logic of composition would denote, in another work, an amateurism below the level of publication. I do not know whether our failure to notice it is because we have been intoxicated by the wine of the poetry, or dulled by the drum-fire of the scholars' glosses, or simply intimidated by the knowledge that this is Milton's poem. Indeed it is Milton's poem; and what could have been in his mind? I have a suggestion. A feature that obeys the canon of logic is only the mere instance of a universal convention, while the one that violates the canon is an indefeasibly private thing. The poor "instance" would like so much to attain to the dignity of a "particular"! If Milton had respected the rule of composition, he must have appeared as any other author of pastoral elegy, whereas in his disrespect of it he can be the person, the John Milton who is different, and dangerous, and very likely to become famous. (It is ironical if the lapse in question celebrates "Fame".) The logical difficulties in the work of an artist capable of perfect logic may be the insignia of an individuality which would otherwise have to be left to the goodness of the imagination; and that is a calculation which lies, I think, under much modern art. There are living poets, and writers of fiction, and critics at the service of both, who have a perfect understanding of the principle. The incoherence or "difficulty" in the work is not necessarily to be attributed to the unresourcefulness of the artist, as if he could not have straightened it out if he would, but sometimes to his choice.

Under this head comes even that fantastic and licentious typography in which we may find one of the really illustrious manifestations of our modernity. The author is like that gentleman in the world of fashion who is thoroughly initiated, yet takes great pains to break the rule somewhere in order that nobody will make the mistake of not remarking his personality. If there is any force in this way of reasoning, we may believe that Milton's bold play with the forms of discourse constitutes simply one more item in his general insubordinacy. He does not propose to be buried beneath his own elegy. Now he had done a thing somewhat on the order of the present breach in his *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso.* There is a comparative simplicity to these pieces amounting almost to obviousness, but they are saved in several ways. For one thing, they are twin poems, and the parallelism or contrast is very intricate. More to our point, there is a certain lack of definition in the substantive detail; long sentences with difficult grammatical references, and uncertainty as to whether the invocation has passed into the action, and as to just where we are in the action. That trick was like the present one, indicating that the man is getting ahead of the poet, who is not being allowed to assimilate the matter into his formal style.

More acurately, of course, *they would like to indicate it;* the poet being really a party to the illusion. Therefore he lays himself open to the charge of being too cunning, and of overreaching himself; the effect is not heroic but mock-heroic. The excited Milton, breathless, and breaking through the logic of composition, is charming at first; but as soon as we are forced to reflect that he counterfeited the excitement, we are pained and let down. The whole poem is properly an illusion, but a deliberate and honest one, to which we consent, and through which we follow the poet because it enables him to do things not possible if he were presenting actuality. At some moments we may grow excited and tempted to forget that it is illusion, as the untrained spectator may forget and hiss the villain at the theatre. But we are quickly reminded of our proper attitude. If the author tends to forget, all the more if he pretends to forget, we would recall him to the situation too. Such license we do not accord to poets and dramatists, but only to novelists, whose art is young. And even these, or the best of these, seem now determined, for the sake of their artistic integrity, to surrender it.

So *Lycidas*, for the most part a work of great art, is sometimes artful and tricky. We are disturbingly conscious of a man behind the artist. But the critic will always find too many and too perfect beauties in it ever to deal with it very harshly.

The Restoration of Property

II. *The Handicap Against Restoration*

Hilaire Belloc

As we approach the problem of the restoration of property there are two main principles to be kept in mind:

(1) The first is that *any effort to restore the institution of property* (that is, re-establish a good distribution of property in a proletarian society such as ours has become) *can only be successful through a deliberate reversal of economic tendencies.*

(2) The second is that *our effort will fail unless it be accompanied by regulations making for the preservation of private property when it shall have been restored.*

Both these principles are essential to success. As I have said, without a sufficient desire for property present in a sufficient number of people, the attempt cannot succeed anyhow. But however strong that desire, and however widespread, the effort will also fail if these two principles are not concurrently observed.

I have compared the restoration of private property in a society such as ours, where it has been ruined, to the re-afforestation of land.

Another parallel is the reclamation of swamp. Natural tendencies have made a piece of land marshy. It lies low, the rainfall is heavy, the soil impervious and sticky. To reclaim it you must act *against* natural tendency. You must drain, cut channels, embank; and having done so, you must see to it that the banks, drains, and channels shall be maintained against the constant effort of nature to drag the land back to swamp again.

So it is with property. Property as a general social institution, well-divided property, having disappeared and Capitalism having taken its place, you cannot reverse the process without acting *against* natural economic tendencies. Well-divided property will not spring up of itself in a Capitalist society. It must be artificially fostered. Communism will spring up of itself and flourish in a Capitalist society, for it is a product of Capitalist thought and moves along the same lines as Capitalism. But well-divided property will not so arise.

Moreover, once restored, Property must be constantly sustained or it will lapse again into Capitalism.

Private property acting unchecked, that is, in the absence of all safeguards for the preservation of the small man's independence, tends inevitably to an ultimate control of the means of production by a few; that is, in economics, to Capitalism, and therefore in politics to plutocracy.

At this point I must introduce a digression to meet two objections which will be made by any socialist reader upon his hearing this admission (as he would call it) on my part. For whether a man be a socialist enthusiastically (because he believes communal property to be the most just economic arrangement) or whether he be a socialist reluctantly (because he believes that communal control, though odious, is the lesser of two evils and the only alternative to control by a few rich men), he takes it for granted that industrial capitalism was ultimately *inevitable* wherever private property was a social institution.

On reading, I say, this which he would call an "admission" on our side, that private property unchecked by special preservative conditions lapses into Capitalism and all its evils, he may consider that since the defenders of property are agreed that it must be so, further discussion is a waste of time. Or he may be one of those that say: "Perhaps private property could have been restored under simpler conditions, but in the modern State, with its use of machinery and its conquest of space, it is too late to make the attempt."

Both these positions are erroneous.

The first, which is the commonest and which we hear on every side from socialists all around us, is based upon bad history pressed into the service of bad philosophy. It is not true that Capitalism arose inevitably from the necessary development of economic institutions under the doctrine of private property. Capitalism only arose *after* the safeguards guaranteeing well-distributed private property had been deliberately broken down by an evil will insufficiently resisted. It was not Capitalism that came first and gradually dissolved the institution of well-divided property; it was the conditions under which alone well-divided property could survive, and had survived for centuries, which were first destroyed. Only then, after their destruction, was the field free for the growth of plutocracy in politics and Capitalism in the economic structure of the State. There was something of a proletariat before the great revolution took place. There were landless men, many of them, by the end of the Middle Ages, and there were men working at transport and exchange, and in the crafts, who had not enough property to count. But the point is that they did not give their tone to the State. They were not so numerous as to mark the character of society until the religious revolution of the sixteenth century had destroyed the ancient walls which had protected the freedom of the human city.

The first great blow was the destruction of the guilds, coupled with the seizure of collegiate property in all countries transformed by the Reformation, especially England. This was followed up by a series of positive enactments in England, of which that one called the "Statute of Frauds" was perhaps the chief instrument in destroying the yeomanry. The great efflorescence of Capitalism came *after* all that bad work had been done, and was only made possible by that bad work.

Nor was it true that machinery in its various forms, including the modern conquest of space, rapidity of transport in material things and ideas, was at the root of this modern evil. The machine does not control the mind of man, though it affects the mind of man; it is that mind of man that can and should control the machine. Moreover, it is not true that the machine is necessarily a centralizer of effort; in some cases it is, in others it is not. The railway worked in favour of those who desired to centralize effort for their own advantage; it added a new support for an already founded capitalist system. But the internal combustion engine works the other way. It transports men and things in decentralized fashion, and it is at the command of the small man. The bus in the country was decentralizing the control of passenger traffic, and the truck that of light freight traffic, when capitalist monopoly got to work and began to eat up the lesser units. Had a cumulative tax been clapped on to the ownership of more than a few vehicles licensed for country transport, a tax becoming high at half a dozen vehicles and prohibitive at a dozen, we should have continued the small property that was growing up. Similarly steam machinery in the mid-nineteenth century and earlier could be used in favour of already established Capitalism and in a fashion hostile to small property. But electrical power works just the other way. Its origin must be centralized, but its distribution may be infinitely varied, in the smallest units as well as in the largest.

Even where the modern instrument is expensive and therefore makes for centralization, it can be owned and worked as guild property, or in distributed shares, well safeguarded.

The whole attitude of the old-fashioned socialist, or, as he has now logically become, the Communist, with his well-worn argument of inevitability, is rooted in a wrong conception of what men are—that is, a false philosophy—supported by a wrong conception of the historical process reached by the putting of things in the wrong historical order. And though it is true that unchecked competition must ultimately produce the rule of ownership by a few, yet it is also true that mankind has always felt this to be the danger, has instinctively safeguarded himself against that danger by the setting up of institutions for the protection of small property, and that these institutions have never broken down of themselves, but always and only under the conscious action of a deliberately hostile attack.

There are seven main avenues whereby unchecked competition tends to put the few into the control of the means of production, transport, and exchange, and therefore of society as a whole. There are seven main ways whereby healthy normal human society with a mass of well-distributed ownership can degenerate into a Capitalist society, the mark of which is the exploitation of the many by the few, and the power of the few over the many.

These seven avenues may be tabulated as follows:

1. The larger unit is in proportion less expensive in management, rent, upkeep, and all things that are called in commercial jargon "overhead charges": the only limit to this tendency being the difficulty of organizing and conducting units beyond a certain size; and that difficulty is more and more easily overcome by practice and the development of perfected organization.

2. The larger unit is better able to purchase all the more expensive instruments for production, distribution, and exchange, whether in the form of machinery, advertising, or information, through which, other things being equal, one is possessed of a better basis for judgement.

3. The larger unit can borrow more easily *in proportion* than the smaller. It can tap bank credit more easily especially, and bank credit is, today, the chief factor in economic activity of all kinds.

4. The larger institution can undersell the smaller one at a loss, until the smaller one is imperilled or

killed. The richer man can thus "rope in" the smaller man, or "freeze him out"; that is, compel him to alliance on onerous terms or actually destroy him.

5. The larger unit will accumulate capital under easier conditions than the smaller. The rich man can afford a smaller profit or a lower interest on money than the poorer man.

6. Plutocracy once established will corrupt the legislature so that laws will be made in its own favour, increasingly handicapping the small man and advantaging the larger.

7. Plutocracy once established will equally corrupt the administration of justice, weighing the scales in favour of the rich man against the poor man.

Let us consider these seven dangers more particularly.

1. The overhead charges. This is one of the stock arguments of Communism, and a good one so far as it goes. The old typical illustration used to be, in England, the retail urban milk trade. Your Fabian bewailed the state of affairs in which two small men, each with the goodwill of a milk route, overlapped. He pointed out that the expenses of distribution would be vastly reduced by one system controlling the whole mass of small milk routes as they existed not so long ago. He has lived to see the thing come about, in England at least; for the small man in the milk trade has almost disappeared. A huge monopoly has swallowed him up.

And what is true of the milk trade is true of all the other examples of distribution and of most of the examples of production. Chain shops have destroyed the individual shopkeeper. Where there were, say, forty thousand independent grocers, there came to be forty thousand managers, the wage slaves of a combine, because the cost of administration is less, and this economic advantage handicaps the small man against the great. It has gone on all around us during the past generation at a pace which has increased out of all knowledge, until today on all sides we are gripped by monopoly. Those of my generation can remember a time when for a hundred necessities of daily life individual shops or craftsmen were present throughout our great cities. Today they are fast disappearing; most of them have already gone.

2. In purchasing information for coming to a correct judgement, the larger group of capital has an obvious advantage over the smaller. It is apparent in every economic activity. And one department of it, the ease of negotiation, is perhaps more striking than the rest. You can make a merger of a few great firms and with that merger a monopoly of what they produce or what they distribute, where you could not make a merger of a number of small firms. And with such power admitted freely, working without check, monopoly is the inevitable term to which the whole process tends. Again, the large unit in modern scientific production—*e.g.*, electrical—has a mass of technical experts and a quasi-monopoly of informed ability to execute. To such, a government must perforce turn when great works are undertaken. The power of a larger unit to purchase the more expensive material instrument which the smaller units cannot purchase (save in combination) is also obvious; but it is not always equally apparent, as it should be, that the larger unit can more easily command another immaterial in-

strument of the greatest force: publicity. We all know that advertising has become one of the worst plagues of modern life: what we must also keep constantly before our eyes is that the opportunity for this abuse increases *out of proportion with the increase of the unit at work.* Five hundred thousand dollars spent on advertising has not ten times the effect of fifty thousand dollars—it has more like fifty times the effect.

It has been discovered that with a dull urban population, all formed under a mechanical system of State education, a suggestion or command, however senseless and unreasoned, will be obeyed if it be sufficiently repeated. Now, in issuing such suggestions and commands the larger man has an overwhelming advantage over the smaller. He can, as it were, compel by suggestion. He can create by it a market for his wares, which the small man could never command and out of which the small man will be driven. We all must remark and deplore the undoubted truth that this particular form of plutocratic advantage (I quote it only as an example, but I do so because it is the most glaring and offensive example of all) tends not only to establish a few rich men or small groups as masters of distribution and production, but also to produce and to distribute the worst things. Everyone must have noticed how an article immediately deteriorates after an "advertising campaign" has been started in its favour.

It is true that this particular evil would in time correct itself as the general evil of Capitalism increased, for when all is monopoly, even advertising will not be required. But as things stand today, this fungoid growth of advertising has done evil beyond anything which the last generation could have imagined: undoubtedly it has ruined the Press. The Press cannot print, even where it should so desire (and being itself in the hands of monopolists it does not so desire to print), any truth which the great advertisers desire to have suppressed. And that is why our field of vision, even on the most urgent public affairs, grows narrower and narrower.

3. What the power to obtain credit, and especially of course bank credit, means today we shall discuss when we come to examine the part played by finance in industrial Capitalism; but we note here that the advantage enjoyed in this department by the larger unit is, again, as in the other instances given, out of proportion to the size of the units engaged. The small craftsman can hardly borrow at all—perhaps a few dollars privately at ruinous interest. The somewhat larger man can borrow more, in proportion, upon the security of his business, but he is not "interesting" to the banker. The owner—or controller—of a very large business can borrow on quite another scale. He does not command, say, ten times the credit of a unit with a tenth of his business, he commands far more and on easier terms.

There are three main ways in which this advantage works:

(*a*) The large unit can bargain for special rates of interest, lower than are granted to the smaller unit, because (1) the cost of "handling" the loan is proportionately less, (2) the transaction is unilateral in the case of the small man but mutual in the case of the large man. It does not matter much to the bank whether Jones the grocer is their client for $5,000, while it is life and death to Jones to get the money. It matters a great deal to the bank to have the great Sir Hannibal Smith for a client, with his loan of a million bringing to the bank $45,000 a year, or even only $40,000. And Sir Hannibal is fully aware of that fact.

(*b*) It may often "pay" the bank, in the case of the big man, to "throw good money after bad". If they sell the big man up they lose a potential source of later income. They try to "tide him over". We see the effects of this in mills which the banks have supported through the slump until they owed far more than they were worth; and in large commercial men whose private households are actually paid for week by week out of the banks' resources, because the banks find, or think they find, it to their advantage to keep them afloat.

(*c*) A subtle point, but a very real one, the large client is in the same "atmosphere" as the bank. They are both "Big Business". The psychology of credit works here most powerfully in the very large man's favour, and the proof of this truth is seen in the very numerous cases where, after a man in a large way has failed, bank credit has been discovered to have been put at his service upon his mere name, with no real security at all behind the last of many loans.

4. The larger unit can undersell the smaller unit by fraud as well as by cheaper overhead charges. This is one of the oldest complaints against centralized capital and the worst of the big man's methods in his swallowing up the small man. It was one of the first evils of the growing capitalist system to be noted. It was already in full swing shortly after the middle of the

nineteenth century. It is of course for all those who admit the doctrine of the Just Price, manifestly a form of theft.

It works thus. The larger unit of capital can afford to lose on its wares for a longer time than the small unit. If both the larger and the smaller are producing a particular article at a dollar, and both in competition sell it at seventy-five cents, each will be losing twenty-five cents on every sale. The process could not go on indefinitely, but the larger unit of capital can stand the loss longer than the smaller one. The small man will break, while the large man is still solvent. And this iniquitous method by which the large man can destroy the small, is, in all its modifications and varied forms, not only one of the most obvious but one of the most pernicious activities of private property acting purely competitively and uncontrolled. It is also, as we shall see later, when we come to the question of restrictive prohibitions, one of the most difficult to deal with. For there are many conditions under which a man may honestly and in good faith sell at a loss, and the distinction between these and the conditions under which he sells in order to ruin a competitor is difficult indeed to establish.

5. The larger unit of capital will automatically be accumulated for a lesser reward than the small one. This is an exceedingly important point which the earlier critics of Capitalism overlooked.

Capital accumulates for a certain reward. Capital is created by saving out of production for the purposes of future production, and it will not be so accumulated by anyone, the individual owner nor the Communist State, save for some standard of remuneration.

The measure of this reward sufficient to provoke an accumulation of capital, John Stuart Mill called "The Effective Desire of Accumulation", and we cannot do better than adopt this conventional term. Men will not forego a present for a future good save on terms of increment. They will not deprive themselves of the immediate enjoyment of a unit of wealth for the sake of a future unit of wealth, unless the second is larger than the first. A man certainly will not wittingly forego a hundred dollars' worth of immediate enjoyment if he knows that at the end of a year he will only have the same hundred dollars for his pains. He will not save that hundred dollars if he knows that at the end of a year he will only have a hundred and five. He *may* do so if he sees a hundred and ten dollars at the end of the year. He must have increment as an incentive, and the amount of increment which will set him to work to save, the reward sufficient to make him forego immediate enjoyment, is his "effective desire of accumulation".

It is an error, as I have just said, to imagine that this factor is only present under Capitalism. It is necessarily present under Communism, or under a well-divided property, and indeed in any economic system whatsoever. Capital is accumulated with the purpose of future production in excess of its present amount, and if it were not expecting such addition, it would not be accumulated at all.

Now this being so, we note at once that the wealthy man will feel an effective desire for accumulation for a smaller increment than will the poorer man. We put it conversationally when we say that it is worth a man's while to get $5,000 a year on $100,000 capital, but hardly worth his while to save ten dollars in order to get a benefit of fifty cents at the end of the year. Another way of putting it is to repeat the obvious truth that the margin for saving in the case of poor men is narrow, while that of rich men is wide. It is easier to save out of $25,000 a year than out of $2,500. The poor man who saves "against a rainy day", who looks on his savings as a sum to be called upon later for his maintenance, will often take very low interest rather than none. Often he will seek for none and merely leave his money on current account, or keep it in a box. But when it comes to investment and a permanent denying of himself for the sake of future reward, it is another matter.

In other words, you cannot tempt small capital to make the beginnings of serious accumulation at the rates which are sufficient for large capital. In order to get the small man to accumulate, in order, that is, to create well-distributed small capital through the accumulation of little savings, you must offer a proportionately higher reward than for large savings.

Unrestricted economic tendency works therefore to the advantage of large units in this case again. The cost of managing a quantity of little savings banks accounts, for instance, is out of all proportion greater than the cost of handling large balances and in point of fact we always find, in the modern capitalistic system, that the first small beginnings of savings are offered lower rewards than the larger ones. In England the Post Office gave no more than half the rate of the State after the War, and the Savings Certificates were calculated at a rate lower than that of the main national loans.

6. The effect of plutocracy in corrupting the legislative machine needs in theory no demonstration, for we all know nowadays such corruption is ubiquitous, and nowhere does it work with greater force than under the parliamentary system. For it to have effect, there is no necessity for actually handing over shares or money to the politicians, though a great deal of that simple form of corruption does take place, for even when such direct action of plutocracy upon the legislative machine is not exercised, there is indirect "pressure" of all kinds. The evil is less formidable under absolute monarchy than under any other form of government, for the whole point of absolute monarchy is that the monarch is too wealthy to be bribed, as well as too strong to be bullied. But in all other forms of government the pressure of the whole wealthy class upon the legislative machine is felt, and when that wealthy class is supreme and has complete economic power over the mass of the citizens, laws will inevitably be made favouring the continuance of the system and handicapping the better distribution of property. Not only statutes, but all kinds of regulations and customs will conform to this rule.

7. The last noticeable effect of plutocratic pressure is that exercised upon the administration of justice. This again, in its cruder and simpler form is less dangerous than in its indirect form. Where the direct bribing of the judges is eliminated there remain two powerful examples of plutocratic effects upon them. The first is the cost of obtaining justice; the second, the legislative effect of judicial decisions.

As to the first of these, we are today surrounded by it on every side. The cost of recovering the smallest debt is out of all proportion to the cost of recovering a large one. The scale of payments which have to be met before a citizen is enabled to have justice at all is higher in a plutocracy than in any other form of government, and the cost of appeals is the strongest of all the evil forces at work in this field. It is a mere commonplace that the wealthier unit can take a thing to the ultimate court of appeal, the House of Lords or the Supreme Court, where the poorer rival cannot.

The effect of the same spirit upon judicial decisions has been evident through history during the last three hundred years, and was particularly strong during the great confiscations of land. It was mainly by judicial decisions, rather than by direct legislation, that the waste lands, the minerals, forests, commons, and the rest, were alienated in the past. It was by judicial decision, because the lawyers' guilds were affiliated with the rising plutocracy of the seventeenth century, that the yeomen were dispossessed under the Statute of Frauds. For if that piece of legislation had not been applied retrospectively, it would not have had the revolutionary effect it did have.

Our first approach, then, to the problem must be the consideration of what remedies are available by way of check, modification, or prohibition, for meeting these seven lines of attack which are followed by large property in its ceaseless task of absorbing or attempting to absorb small property and to turn the small owners into a proletariat. To that consideration I will turn in my next article.

(*To be continued*)

REVIEWS

The Making of Andrew Jackson

THE re-creation of the portrait of one from a past age, about whom storms have raged, against whom invectives have been hurled, to whom bad motives and high praises have been accorded, offers obstacles which perhaps omniscience alone can leap. Great labour must be performed in mastering the history of the period in which the subject lived, the imagination must be strong enough to restore the period of the times and to grasp the sweep of complex forces which motivated the collective mind. This is only preliminary to a greater labour, it is merely setting up the stage and preparing the properties and lighting effects for the actor. This accomplished, the writer is ready to begin his real work. He must now spend years perhaps in search for personal information, and must weigh and test the evidence of both friends and foes of his protagonist. When this collection of fragments is completed he is ready to begin piecing together a human being with the chances all against his being successful. Among many obstacles which still confront him the greatest, perhaps, will be the problem of proportion between historical narrative or background and pure biography or personal narrative—the same problem which confronts the historical novelist. In steering away from the Charybdis of too much historical narrative lest he submerge his characters as have Beveridge and Nevins in their lives of Lincoln and Cleveland, the author crashes against the

Scylla of the historical vacuum so characteristic of modern biography.

Marquis James in his first volume of the life of Andrew Jackson* has probably found himself confronted with as many difficulties as it is possible to have and he has met them splendidly, on the whole. His narrative is stirring, dramatic, beautifully balanced between pure biography and history, in its form an artistic triumph. His portrait of Jackson is, I believe, the most authentic one thus far presented—and many have been presented. In my own lifetime I have been quite conscious of two contrasting pictures of Jackson. The older was of a man who embodied the frontier in its crudeness, fierceness and unreasonableness, a man whose unbridled temper and insuperable will and spirit crushed all opposition, a lawless, headstrong champion of the West and democracy, whose personal integrity and moral character and passionate love of country raised him above mediocrity. He was blunt, frank, and without guile. His political career was largely the work of close and astute friends such as Major Lewis and Senator Eaton. The more recent picture of Jackson corresponded with the above portrait in the period covered by James's first volume; but he was transformed in his middle age into a Southern gentleman with fine manners, much guile and profound political insight. This is the generally accepted Jackson.

James has made considerable alteration in the portrait of the younger Jackson. Jackson was never the crude, lawless democrat of lowly origin; he was a high-spirited and ambitious boy of excellent family, always conscious of his good breeding, a gentleman in manner and in character. Jackson and his family, though they settled on the frontier in the Waxhaw country, felt themselves no ordinary backwoods people. Jackson's educational advantages in his youth were as good as those of Washington, Patrick Henry or Calhoun. That he did not, in spite of great ability, take more advantage of his opportunity is due to the fact that he proposed to carve his fortunes with other than academic tools. The indomitable will, the blasting temper, the fearlessness, the energy so characteristic of later years are all here, but one is made aware also of the presence of great shrewdness and power of calculation and self-control far beyond that of an ordinary youth. The guileless and outspoken young man of early myth is not here. A youngster of twenty who could manipulate his own appointment as attorney general for the western district of North Carolina knew his way about.

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* ANDREW JACKSON *by Marquis James* (BOBBS MERRILL. 448 pp. $3.75.)

As a young man, contrary to tradition, Jackson disclosed a fine sense of justice. As a judge who served six years on the bench of the superior court he has, perhaps, surpassed any judge on the Tennessee bench in popularity. The tradition of rashness and injudicious conduct is not borne out by a careful study of his career as a judge, plantation master, or general. The American army has had few more rigid disciplinarians. But he was no martinet. The victories of Horseshoe Bend and New Orleans would have been impossible without this discipline. Nor were the proclamation of martial law in New Orleans and the refusal to honour the writs of habeas corpus the acts of a tyrant. When peace was declared and the danger over, Jackson showed his respect for law, by standing in Federal Judge Hall's Court and receiving a thousand dollar fine for his refusal to obey the writ of habeas corpus. He could have easily defied Hall—in fact could have thrown him in prison with impunity—but he gracefully submitted.

Jackson's nature was not all iron and fire. His deep and lasting love for Rachael, his all-embracing affection and sympathy for her family, his tender love for his adopted children, including an Indian boy, are fundamental traits in his character which draw him closer to the heart than any public man America has had.

James, while doubtless giving the best picture thus far presented of Jackson's life from 1767 to 1821, has not written a definitive biography of this first period of his protagonist's life. In view of the fact that the author is now in the process of collecting material for his second volume, he should profit from some adverse criticism, for the ground is still hot and smoking in the second chapter of Jackson's life. With his fine equipment for writing the perfect biography —almost—the author has tripped over one of the first obstacles in his way. He has neglected to master the history of Tennessee from 1788 to 1803, the period in which Jackson entered middle Tennessee and rose to high position and found himself in conflict with John Sevier. Chapters IV to VIII inclusive deal with this part of Jackson's life and constitute a fundamental defect in the otherwise fine work. James in his lack of knowledge of this period has found himself forced to choose between the historical vacuum on the one hand and semi-fictional background on the other. He abhorred the vacuum and rendered that portion of his biography invalid to a certain extent. Had he consulted Driver's *Life of John Sevier*, *William's Lost State* of Franklin, Whitaker's *The Spanish American Frontier* and the newspapers of the region he would have discovered that John Sevier, and not Andrew Jackson, was the colossus on the frontier at this time. He would have known that the quarrel between Jackson and Sevier had more to do with Jackson's desire to usurp Sevier's leadership than with land frauds or personal insults. He would have probably discovered, too, that old Nollychucky Jack Sevier outmanœuvred Jackson and drove the latter out of politics until the War of 1812 brought him forth again.

With the exception of the faulty historical background of these few chapters, James's biography is eminently satisfactory. His narrative of the Creek War and the Pensacola-Mobile-New Orleans Campaigns of the War of 1812 is the best in the field. His account of Jackson's generalship leaves one feeling that Jackson possessed military gifts of a high order.

James shows Jackson emerging from a war whose principal drama outside of the naval battles had been furnished by Old Hickory himself, the greatest hero, perhaps, that America has ever possessed outside of Washington—and certainly the most loved. In the Florida governorship, one sees the crafty politicians attempting to draw the curtain of oblivion over the sick old man lest the people rise up and make him President. The clamour for Jackson was great. He could have had the Presidency for the asking in 1816. But Jackson felt satiated. His ambition was dead. He was and had been for many years very ill; malaria, chronic dysentery and gunshot wounds had, he thought, brought him to the brink of the grave at the age of fifty-four. What little time was left to him would be spent with Rachael. As a matter of fact, Jackson was destined to live over a quarter of a century longer and to outlive his beloved Rachael by nearly twenty years. He considered that he had had enough honours and that he had performed enough services for his country. He thought his career was over. It had only begun. The years 1767 to 1821 covered by James's first volume might well be called the making of Andrew Jackson.

FRANK L. OWSLEY

The Modern Dilemma

THAT the Western world is going through a change as profound as that which, four hundred years ago, produced the Renaissance out of the Middle Ages is at once the most interesting and the most disturbing factor in our times. The movements which have characterized the last four hundred years in Western politics, art, philosophy, religion, are yielding to new. Political and economic individualism are, for example, giving place to movements which emphasize the community. Art has abandoned the naturalism which had animated all Europe since Jan Van Eyck and Masaccio for a stylistic form of expression closer to that of the Middle Ages or the Orient. The division of Christianity is being replaced by a desire for reunion. But Europe looks with despair upon the process of change into which it plunged so optimistically a century ago. Enthusiasts may go on prophesying that Science will bring the golden age of peace but to most of us it seems more likely to finish us with poison gas rained from airplanes in the next war. Democracy has stimulated an intense national self-consciousness that is far more destructive than tyranny. The material and intellectual dominance which Europe won in the nineteenth century has armed the subject civilizations to fight back with Western ideas and Western weapons. What it means when one of the vast, slow-moving, compact cultures of the Orient is cut loose from its foundations and fed with European materialism, the West is learning from Japan. It is not a pretty sight to watch what was a century ago one of the world's noblest and least predatory cultures transformed into a ruthless imperialism.

In this little book* (one of Messrs. Sheed & Ward's admirable *Essays in Order*), Mr. Dawson has raised the question: How are we to adjust ourselves to this vast movement of change? He believes that the problem will be solved only through the re-establishment of moral and intellectual authority in Western civilization and that this can be achieved only by the assertion of the unity of European civilization over the particularism of today. In his previous book *The Making of Europe* he traced the elements which went into the creation of a distinctive Western culture common to all Europe. In the present essay he examines this common tradition in the light of our own day, to see if its leading principles—Christianity, democracy, and science—are serviceable in the present crisis.

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* THE MODERN DILEMMA *by Christopher Dawson* (SHEED & WARD. 113 pp. $1.00)

For Mr. Dawson believes that both the crisis of the modern world and its solution have their roots in Europe. It was Europe which forced economic unity upon the world, injected the yeast of its ideas of political liberty and social justice into Russia and the East, and taught the world a new technique of national selfishness and economic exploitation. A new world is emerging from these changes but it is only in and through Europe that this new world can realize itself. Europe has created a material unity, it must now complete the work by creating a spiritual unity. What we look upon as world civilization today is merely the influence of Europe on the world. "All the living forces that are moving the world today, whether scientific, economic or political, have their roots in European culture and would wither if that culture were to break down." Even the United States, which are the equal of Europe in material and technical organization, cannot take the place of Europe and carry on the work of world organization.

This, Mr. Dawson believes, is why the League of Nations is quite inadequate; for the new world order must be more than international, it must be intercultural. "There can be no true international world order without an international world culture which does not as yet exist, while the League of Nations, valuable as it may be as a medium of international relations, is quite inadequate to deal with the conflict of civilizations." The creation of a sociological reality on which to base a new order must come, if at all, from Europe.

But at the same time that Europe faces this responsibility, its civilization is morally discredited and the

Western peoples themselves no longer have faith in its value. The explanation of this Mr. Dawson finds in the growth of national particularism, which kept pace in the nineteenth century with the material unification of the world. "National particularism has deprived Western culture of its moral unity and its common spiritual ideals and has left it naked before the world as a purely material effort of economic exploitation and predatory imperialism." The machinery of modern civilization is without control and threatens to destroy its makers.

There are two obvious ways of dealing with the problem. One is that of blind reaction, preached by the successors of Ruskin and Tolstoy. They say that our material progress is all a ghastly mistake and we ought all to go back to a simple life on the land. Mr. Dawson dismisses this extremist solution as impossible. One must agree with him, for until the extreme agrarians explain how to take care of our present population except by retaining at least a good part of our present economic machinery, the proposal is pure sentimentalism.

The second method is that of the conventional revolutionary: make a clean break with the past and start all over again on the basis of the scientific organization and mass civilization exemplified by Moscow and Detroit. But it is as impossible for a society as for an individual to cut itself off from the past. Nor is it possible to construct the purely material civilization which this implies. Human nature must be satisfied as well as economic necessity. Here again the facts support Mr. Dawson. Moscow has found it necessary to transform a new economy into a new religion. The hunger of Detroit for richness of life is one of the outstanding characteristics of that amazing city. It is not a coincidence that Detroit and Los Angeles are the happy hunting ground of the new-thought and self-improvement quack.

Europe cannot escape from itself nor look for help outside itself. Mr. Dawson draws a parallel between the present state of Europe and that of Rome at the end of the Republic. Rome, like Europe, had conquered and organized the world but in the process had lost her own soul, the very qualities which enabled her to rule. The result was a system of ruthless exploitation which provoked social revolution at home and a rising of the subject peoples abroad. Augustus was able to transform Roman imperialism into a stable state not by a military victory but by inspiring the Romans with a new spirit. The highest expression of the Roman genius is found in Virgil's poetic statement of the Augustan ideals. Modern Europe lacks the political unity of Rome but it has a far richer spiritual tradition. The solution of the modern problem, Mr. Dawson insists, is the recovery of Europe's spiritual unity. With this in mind he examines the three main principles of Western culture—democracy, science, and Christianity.

Democracy is not the creation of Rousseau but an outgrowth of the religious foundation of Europe. It was Christianity's insistence upon the worth of the individual soul, even of the lowliest slave, its insistence that human personality possesses a value transcending anything in the economic or political order, which established the principle that the state exists for man and not man for the state. The modern revolt is not against this principle but against the neglect of it. Nineteenth-century materialism equipped modern man with new powers which were used for unchecked exploitation of his fellow man. Communism and Socialism are a mistaken protest against the materialistic distortion of democracy, not its essence.

Science, perhaps the most original creation of the Western genius, is also the most powerful dissolvent of the old order. Many scientists believe that it is destined to found a new one in its place. Yet the claim of nineteenth century science to include the whole of truth has been contradicted by science itself. The modern school of physicists hold that the world of moral and spiritual phenomena is outside the reach of science but may be none the less real: science is only one approach to reality. As to the more popular view that science is a way of getting things done, this leaves unsettled the question of what things science should get done: killing people with poison gas or protecting them with preventive medicine. The popular confusion is again a result of the materialistic view. Science is an activity of the spirit and rests upon a spiritual absolute—the love of knowledge for its own sake. It must either create its own religion or be brought into relation with a philosophic point of view, becoming again "the spiritual power of intelligence illuminating and ordering the multiplicity and confusion of the world of sense".

The problem of the modern world resolves itself into that of the re-establishment of a moral order. But the modern social critic who raises the question of how we are to adjust ourselves to a changing world, raises not one question but two. Are standards necessary in the present world? Are they possible? Mr. Dawson answers the first in the affirmative. In answer to the second he says that man-made ethical systems lack the solidity and driving force which is communicated only by religious faith; like Lincoln Steffens, he believes that the only way to make our world system work is to restore Christianity. Having marshalled the experience of the race, he appeals back of it to revelation.

This is precisely where the modern mind ceases to follow him. Mr. Dawson frankly admits that the ideal of God is the very one which Western man today finds it most difficult to accept. Perhaps the real preliminary must be another Thomas Aquinas to harmonize not Aristotle and the Early Fathers, but their modern equivalents, science and Christ. Society in the thirteenth century had to be convinced that human reason, as well as revelation, could be believed. Today the positions are reversed and it is revelation, not reason, which society must be convinced is a road to truth.

E. P. RICHARDSON

St. Augustine Without God

IT IS our lot to live today in a world which turns to Miss Rebecca West for a pronouncement on St. Augustine.* There are undoubtedly scores of readers of the series of little books which are called "The Appleton Biographies" in this country who do not now and never will know more about the Bishop of Hippo than can be found in this fanciful extravaganza, this imaginative *tour de force* purporting to be a sober "life" of a great man. For Miss West's biography is a *tour de force* beside which the notion of writing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark must hide its diminished head. She has had the inspiration to write a life of St. Augustine which leaves out St. Augustine's God, and the result is inevitably a volume which surprises by its novelty more than it illuminates by its truth. The consequence of the private apocalypse which Miss West has been granted concerning the life of the saint is that she must perforce deny again and again that Augustine knew what he was talking about, that he could possibly have been privy to his own motives, or have had one-tenth the insight into the heart and spirit of his mother Monnica which has broken upon Miss West.

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* ST. AUGUSTINE *by Rebecca West* (APPLETON. 172 pp. $2.00)

Let us start where the author starts, after a chapter on the state of Rome and the African colonies and two pages which compare St. Augustine, to his advantage, with Tolstoy. "Nevertheless, we must not take the *Confessions* as altogether faithful to reality," we are warned. "It is too subjectively true to be objectively true. There are things in St. Augustine's life which he could not bear to think of at all, or very much, or without falsification, so the *Confessions* are not without gaps, understatements, and mis-statements." And forthwith Miss West sets about correcting the errors which have stood for seventeen centuries.

This is no light task, for it means retelling Augustine's story, offering a new explanation wherever that poor doltish saint had offered God's mercy and God's grace. She must supply some emotion at once capable of explaining his eminence and yet comprehensible to "moderns", in place of the love of God. Indeed she goes about it bravely, but with such an array of "probablys", "can only have beens", and "perhapses", with so many emotionally chosen adjectives, that at last she trips herself in her own speculations in one of the most astonishing passages anywhere to be found. But before she reaches that page she has contrived so strong a case for her own theory that she must quite honestly have forgotten that it is only a theory after all. It is, in short, that St. Augustine was the victim of a mother-fixation so deep and so morbid that not one item of his experience can be explained without reference to that attachment.

She begins on it at once, with a dictum entirely without foundation, but essential to her if she was to have her book at all. "And among these last [mis-statements]", she says, "may be counted the suggestions he makes against his father, Patricius. He speaks of him always in a tone of hatred and moral reprobation which was probably quite unjustified." Against this "always" it would be wise to put without delay a few of St. Augustine's rare sentences about Patricius, to see if the hatred and moral reprobation which are so obvious to Miss West force themselves on the reader with no theory to propound: "Thou ornamentedst her [Monnica], making her reverently amiable, and admirable unto her husband. And she so endured the wronging of her bed, as never to have any quarrel with her husband thereon. For she looked for Thy mercy on him, that believing on Thee, he might be made chaste. But besides this, he was fervid, as in his affections, so in anger: but she had learnt not to resist an angry husband." Then follows a passage which rouses all Miss West's ire, where Monnica counsels her fellow matrons to remember that they are their husband's slaves (as indeed under Roman law they were): "And . . . they, knowing what a choleric husband she endured, marvelled." A little later, in the same book, when Monnica comes to die and realizes that her place of burial now is indifferent to her, there comes that moving line: "For because they had lived in great harmony together, she also wished (so little can the human mind embrace things divine) to have this addition to that happiness, and to have it remembered among men, that after her pilgrimage beyond the seas, what was earthly of this united pair had been permitted to be united beneath the same earth." (Miss West, when she comes to it, quotes from this very paragraph, but she does not quote this line. Instead, by a marvel of incomprehension, she attempts to show that St. Augustine rejoiced, not, as he says he did, because his mother had put aside her last human frailty, but because at last he, her lover-son, triumphed over his father.) I confess I cannot find one word in these quotations—and they are representative of all that St. Augustine ever said of his father—that sounds like hatred. That he was more aware of his mother than of his father is true, as it is of most children from the middle and lower classes who are nourished and cared for by their mothers; that Monnica was, as he says, not only his mother in the flesh but his mother in Christ is the explanation Augustine gives for lingering on her story. And, with all respects to the New Enlightenment, St. Augustine's own account seems fully as revelatory as chatter of fixations.

But there are other sentences in this book, of such innocent presumption that they can hardly even offend: "We know nothing of Monnica save what her son tells us, and that is plainly often a distortion of reality. . . . She did not want her son to grow up . . . [When Patricius spoke of Augustine's marriage]. But Monnica fell into a shuddering alarm. . . . Very evidently Christianity need not mean emasculation, but the long struggles of Augustine and Monnica imply that in his case it did." Surely the use of the word "emasculation" in connection with St. Augustine should give even a modernist pause.

So the book goes on. Monnica's sending away of Augustine's concubine must be retold to show that it was because Monnica wanted her infant son to herself again, and that Augustine concurred at last for the same reason. Miss West is utterly unable to accept the reason given again and again, in passage after passage of the *Confessions*: that to Monnica concubinage, however happy, was sin. It would be possible to look about and find a Christian mother holding the same idea today, but no hint of this creeps into the Appleton Biography to disturb the faintly nasty picture so adroitly presented. On it goes: since we cannot accept love of God as a motive, or the religious life as admirable today, since Art must take the place of God in our holy of holies, we come upon such by-passages as these: "This was the process that robbed Africa of a name which should have ranked higher than that of Apuleius, and Latin literature of a name that might have ranked with Virgil. . . ."

"Nearly all his religious treatises are integrated by religious fervour rather than by any recognition that a work should have had a middle, a beginning and an end." We read that "Widows who had taken vows of celibacy were granted special privileges by the Church, as if they were being rewarded for a triumph over the turbulent quality of maleness", yet Miss West is much concerned with St. Augustine's crudity and vulgarity. She charges him outright with being no gentleman, and for sneering at his foes; in a book that is one long sneer.

Three pages, however, rise to heights of impertinence that we may not see the like of in our generation. This is no longer the mere making of a straightforward story into something arresting and strange through the application of psycho-analysis to its problems. The matter under consideration is the reason for Monnica's anxiety to see her son married. Miss West will not have it that St. Monnica, knowing her son's sexual frailty, at which he himself rails continually, looked to marriage to save him from himself. "He says", Miss West remarks, "that she wanted him to be married so that his sexual life could be regularized and he could be baptized; but that really will not do. . . . There must be some other explanation, and it is *probably* of a financial kind. . . . Monnica was *probably* in a nervously exhausted state which forbade her carrying her accustomed burdens. . . . Since the cupboard was bare, and since her son would not enter the Church and become a priest, the tired and desperate woman *can have seen* no hope for the family except in a rich marriage for him. . . . The situation has occurred again and again in every society where men marry for money; innumerable plays and novels have shown us the worried dowager forcing her son to send away his beloved mistress and take a rich wife. *What is a little startling is to see the drama enacted by persons who were subsequently raised to the status of saintship.*"

The italics are all mine. Miss West, I am sure, will see no reason for them. Yet is it not more than a little startling that centuries of scholarship and years of elaborating a literary code should have passed without outlawing the practice of rewriting an existing book, discarding and replacing without one iota of justification, but in true journalistic and novelistic style, all the explicitly stated motives for a solemn action, and then turning to reprehend and to sneer at the characters for motives which arose only in the journalist's brain?

There is no space to point out the many places in which Miss West, completely missing the spirit of St. Augustine's great book, passes her casual and scathing judgement as she runs. To Augustine, too, his concubinage was sin; the book was his *Confessions* and he withholds the name of his companion of fourteen years, whom he dearly loved and openly acknowledged, but whose sin was not his to confess. That her name has no place in such a book as he wrote would seem obvious. Miss West says that "she slinks nameless through his pages". One can open her book at random and come across some such example of incomprehension at every page. An intentional perversity would have fallen into inconsistencies; Rebecca West's misreading of her hero extends flawless from the first page to the last. There is something more at work here than the contemporary desire to minimize greatness especially when it has its roots in religion. Perhaps it is only just to extend to Miss West the indulgence she generously offers to St. Augustine: "Augustine's errors were the result of his position in time, and so were not disgraceful."

DOROTHEA BRANDE

Agrarianism for Commuters

THE turn of events has made Ralph Borsodi into something of a prophet, whose appeal to overthrow factory civilization and conquer the machine by domesticating it will carry new force where it once provoked the ribald laughter of those who were at ease in industrial Zion. *This Ugly Civilization** was originally published in 1929; it was welcomed with only a few mild hand-claps at a time when Henry Ford's *Moving Forward* got roars of applause from business and the serious critical attention of liberals who were not unwilling to mount to the permanent plateau of the new economic era. The book itself was preceded by a series of articles in the *New Republic*, in which Mr. Borsodi described his own agrarian experiment in the neighbourhood of a great city. If I remember correctly, the editors, disclaiming responsibility for Mr. Borsodi's "interesting" ideas, received him with about the same indulgence they now give to capitalist poets. But that is all over now. Henry Ford's book is gathering dust; the *New Republic* has

*THIS UGLY CIVILIZATION *by Ralph Borsodi* (HARPER'S. 468 pp. $3.00.)

gone Communist; the United States has gone off the gold standard; but Mr. Borsodi's book has gone into a new edition. Simultaneously, the factories are noticeably shut down if not overthrown, and statisticians announce that the back-to-the-land movement has brought our farm population up to the numbers it attained in 1910.

And now Mr. Borsodi, besieged with requests for information from folks who want to "go Borsodi", has every right to the decent I-told-you-so of his preface. His plain language and the eloquent circumstantiality of his expoundings will certainly be persuasive to dissatisfied urbanites, who would like to make a change but are not sure how to go about it. To these people Mr. Borsodi has much to say; but he does not talk the language of the people who are already farmers.

Re-examining the book after four years, I find it as strong as ever in its negative analysis of the evils of industrialism and naturally more pointed than ever in its prescriptions for achieving the good life by returning to the land and becoming a home-producer. In general economics, Mr. Borsodi is not so strong; and in the religious matters he brings into the discussion he reveals himself as being as complete a God-hater as the Communists. "We must get rid of religion", he says, "because it is a hindrance to the formulation of a morality intelligent enough to make possible the conquest of comfort." His strange mixture of scepticism with the language of sociology and advertising, to which is added a good deal of Nietzschean rhetoric, may possibly explain why Harry Elmer Barnes, of all living Americans, was chosen to write a foreword for the new edition.

Inevitably, the sound sense of the Borsodi proposals is clouded by his cosmic ranting; a much smaller book, minus the preaching, would have done more practical service. But the sound sense is there nevertheless. The merit of his proposals is to be found, not only in his drastic criticism of industrialism, which is now commonplace in various schools of thought, but in the distinction he draws between the machine in the factory and the machine in the home. It was factory machines, he thinks, that brought us to ugliness and despair; but if from the beginning the industrial revolution had domesticated the machine instead of moving towards factory mass production—if the cottage spinning-wheel, for example, could have been harnessed to steam or electricity, so as to keep the worker at home and the family intact, then all would have been different. And now, the domestication of the machine can still be achieved, and is already, through the diffusion of electric power and small labour-saving devices, in part achieved. Families can move from the city to some farm or plot of ground and lead a self-sufficient existence, less back-breaking than life on the land is supposed to be, by equipping themselves with small machines and staying out of the factory market. While they are canning tomatoes and washing their own clothes with domesticated machinery, they will simultaneously boycott the productions of all but the "essential" factories (such as those that make copper wire), restore the family life, market a very small money crop, and thus cease to be herd-minded and factory-ruled. Above all they will learn the delight of sharing their tasks and seeing the fruit of their labour, and will be enabled to avoid the modern vice of drawing an arbitrary line between their work and their play.

This is good doctrine, and Mr. Borsodi makes such an excellent case that I am on principle disinclined to pick flaws. Undoubtedly people are doing just what Mr. Borsodi advocates, and thus are finding economic relief, along with a kind of rural adventure. But for all its persuasiveness the Borsodi program is incomplete and a little more innocent-minded than a program for an agrarian economy can afford to be. How will the Borsodi agrarian, glancing, it may be, through his Sears, Roebuck catalogue, learn to distinguish between "essential" and "non-essential" factory products, especially if the women do some of the deciding? What will he use for money to buy the numerous domesticated machines? How will the agrarians already on the land banish the spectre of mortgage and foreclosure? How will they, if they cultivate the scepticism or anti-religion that Mr. Borsodi advocates, ever become sufficiently "quality-minded" to resist the corruption of urban centres, which are also sceptical and will be fully as adept in applying salesmanship and mass-production to the domesticated machines as they have been in applying them to all factory products in the past?

My impression is that an anti-religious agrarian is a contradiction in terms, and that the education of nature, as Wordsworth vaguely held, must finally be a religious education, or nothing. I suspect that Mr. Borsodi's plan grows out of a quite understandable desire to eat his cake and have it. It is a plan, far better than industrial slavery, for the part of the urban population which can draw an income from urban sources and keep a good deal of the urban psychology while achieving a measure of independence by removing from the congestion and despair of the factory district. It is what Mr. Borsodi originally set forth, a plan for agrarian commuters, and is less than adequate for the agrarian sections of the United States, where the machine has too often been unfortunately domesticated. As a supplement to much that has been said about the merits of an agrarian economy, Mr. Borsodi's book is to be heartily welcomed. But it is only a supplement. It is nothing like definitive, and at times is actually hostile to the principles of agrarianism as they have been historically developed from Jefferson's day to the present.

DONALD DAVIDSON

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Revival of Monarchy

In his short period in office President Roosevelt has handled a banking crisis in masterly fashion, and through his agriculture, reforestation, currency, and other measures, has acted vigorously to alleviate distress and to provide industry with the purchasing power it needs to resume movement. It is a relief to see capacity for action after floundering ineptitude. No man of good will but wishes the President well in his efforts; anything that might restore business along the old lines sufficiently to lessen the hideous suffering and demoralization of unemployment must be tried and must be supported by all citizens at whatever cost to their own comfort or their own hopes and plans for the future of our public life.

It is in no captious spirit, therefore, that this piece is written to point out that the relief of unemployment and the stimulation of business along the old lines are not a cure for our ills or even a beginning of such a cure. The only hint of the fundamental changes needed lies in the unusual powers accorded the President by Congress. Already the cry of "dictator" has been raised in the press, both in rejoicing and in alarm. But it should be obvious that the emergency powers granted President Roosevelt bear only the most superficial resemblance to the dictatorships that have flourished in Europe since the War. The purpose of this article is to analyze the significance of the contemporary dictatorships in relation to the conditions out of which they spring; in the hope not only of making our political thinking more realistic, but also of indicating the needed course of action in our practical politics.

It is a commonplace among all but the blindest of commentators on public life in this country and most of the countries of Europe that whatever the *form* of government has been—democratic, monarchical, or aristocratic—the *essence* of government for several generations has been plutocracy: the wealthy have controlled the State, and the State has been governed in the interests of the wealthy. A plutocracy which preserves itself in power for a long time (through a series of happy accidents), which spreads its gains among a large number, and which achieves popular support by inducing the bulk of the citizens to believe that they may rise to be a part of itself, does not cease to be a plutocracy.

The moral background of plutocracy is greed. Plutocracy is the enthronement of the desire for gain. In summarizing the last hundred and fifty years of Western history, truth would far outweigh exaggeration if one were to say that the moral history of the period has been the progressive emancipation of greed; the intellectual history has been chiefly the finding of ever more powerful agencies for greed to utilize (scientific industrialism); the political history has been, in the national field, the usurpation of government by the most successfully greedy, and in the international field, the strife resulting from greed using the forces of the State to feed itself (imperialism). The moral, intellectual, political, legal, and technical structure built up by the dominance of greed is called Capitalism. Its essence is the destruction of private property and liberty by the concentration of wealth and the sources of wealth in the hands of a few, who act blindly in their own interests at the expense of the interests of society as a whole.

These familiar facts are mentioned here only as an introduction to a study of the cure that is shaping itself before our eyes. For that Capitalism is a disease which must be cured, and cured quickly, is obvious. Capitalism was inhuman and repulsive enough in the heyday of its power; in its decline, and especially since it nearly blew itself and all civilization to pieces in the Great War which it caused, it has become intolerable.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REFORM OUR PLUTOCRATIC state called Capitalism? In the first place, a plutocracy cannot reform itself. An oligarchical régime which was not at the beginning of its power that rare historical phenomenon, an aristocracy, cannot make itself an aristocracy as its power and popularity wane. Neither the soil nor the seeds of aristocracy are present. Not only is the *aristocratic* solution impossible, but the *democratic* solution as well. The people are powerless to recover the State from a plutocracy. Nor will a plutocracy voluntarily abdicate in favour of its subjects; only an aristocracy would relinquish power when it realized that it had governed unwisely —or would even realize that it had. A plutocracy will grant concessions, punish flagrant offenders among its members, offer bribes, make promises. But it cannot reform itself, and it will not abdicate.

What recourse remains? Besides aristocracy and democracy there is only one form of government: monarchy. The only way to conquer a plutocracy is by means of a monarch. There is no other way possible. Nor is any other necessary.

This will doubtless be unfamiliar and unwelcome language to many readers in this great democracy, founded, as we are told, in revolt from the tyranny of a monarch and aspiring to a higher and freer form of government than that of the kings and tyrants of old. What I mean by monarchy will become clearer in the course of this paper, but let me say at once that I am not speaking of hereditary dynasties, of thrones, sceptres, crowns, courts, and the traditional trappings of royalty. I am speaking of the *monarchical principle.*

What is a monarch? A monarch is a man (or woman, or, formally, child) in whom all governmental responsibility of a State is vested; he governs in the interest of the whole State, and in secular matters stands above all individuals and groups in the State. The ultimate sovereignty of the people is symbolized in him and is by him realized in action. In particular the leading function of the monarch, in the words of Hilaire Belloc, "is to protect the weak against the strong, and therefore to prevent the accumulation of wealth in few hands, the corruption of the Courts of Justice and of the sources of public opinion".

It is worth noting that there is no essential conflict between the monarchical principle, however strongly present, and the full expression of the democratic principle. The democratic *form* is only one way of satisfying the democratic spirit. Those who insist on the absolute superiority of monarchy to other forms of government (my concern here is not with absolute merits but with resolving a particular situation) put the case more emphatically: "There is no People unless there be also a King." When we are confronted with plutocracy, such an apophthegm takes on deep meaning. It is quoted from *Monarchy or Money Power*, the recent valuable book by the Scotch author R. McNair Wilson, who is a Royalist (that is, one who is attached not only to the monarchical principle, but also to its hereditary form and to a particular claimant). His whole passage is worth quoting:

> The story of the Middle Ages is the story of the fight for Kingship, in which the Church, no less than the laity, played a part. The object was to establish Kings secured in their office on the one hand by the grace of God, and on the other by the loyalty of the People, so that power might be assured wherewith to curb the intoxication of privilege and the influence of money. It is evident that the People cannot exert power of itself, for, in truth, there is no People unless there be also a King. Peoples without Kings are ever sundered into parties and factions of which the richest inevitably becomes the most powerful. The triumph of the richest is the occasion of the rewarding of its financial backers.

So much by way of definition. Before coming to the heart of my theme, I shall mention the cure for Capitalism called Communism, apropos of the accession to power in Germany of Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers' Party. One would gather from the fantastic lack of proportion of our press—not to say its gullibility and sensationalism—that the most important aspect of the German revolution was the hardships suffered by Jews under the new régime. Even if the absurd atrocity stories were all true, the fact would be almost negligible beside an event that shouts aloud in spite of the journalistic silence: the victory of Hitler signifies the end of the Communist threat, *forever*. Wherever Communism grows strong enough to make a Communist revolution a danger, it will be crushed by a Fascist revolution. This was indicated by the advent of Mussolini. It is now proved by Hitler. A Communist revolution in any large country has become an impossibility. Communism as the successor to Capitalism has been eliminated.

To show the truth of this contention, let us glance at the factors that made the Communist revolution successful in Russia. They were four: Lenin, a commander of supreme genius; disorder in Russia on an almost incredible scale, especially in the army; a surprise technique in *coup d'état*—seizure of the technological nerve-centres of the capital before attempting the seats of government; and the almost total absence in Russia of a middle class, the main strength against Communism. Now it is obvious that such a favourable combination of circumstances can never happen again. Even assuming a parallel state of disorder, the other factors would not be present. A strong middle class exists in every other Capitalist country. The surprise technique is public knowledge, and has been checkmated by the Fascist opposition.

Above all, there can never be another Lenin. Not that he was unique in ability; from this point of view there is probably a Lenin in every generation, and he might at any time turn out to be on the side of revolution. But never again could a man of Lenin's intelligence and stature as a statesman accept the Marxian philosophy, and so lead a *Communist* revolution. It was still possible in Russia, in the eighties and nineties, for a first-rate mind to swallow the whole Hegelo-Marxian-materialistic-deterministic-Utopian fantasy. But with each year since, that has become increasingly difficult. The whole structure is fading into a nineteenth-century period-piece, along with Fourierism, Anarchism, and the Single Tax. Its canonization by the Soviet régime will not suffice to save it. Can one imagine the young men of Russia, with youth's natural tendency to scoff, not beginning to look for the laughable aspects of the philosophy which is being stuffed down their throats by high pressure pedagogy? And when one begins to look for the laughable aspects of Hegelo-Marxism, the end has come. Outside Russia the abler Marxians —like Max Eastman in this country and John Strachey in England—find the official doctrines too thick and seek to graft the economic and political parts onto a more palatable philosophy. In other words, Marxianism is disintegrating. No: there can never again be a great Marxian— let alone one of the unimaginable greatness to have been able to cope with the development in Germany leading to the installation of Hitler as Chancellor.

The danger of Hitler to Communism was several years ago appreciated by Trotsky, and in 1930 he began urging on the Comintern the policy of having the German Communists unite with the Social Democrats and strike before it was too late. His pamphlet at the end of 1931, *Germany, the Key to the International Situation*, contains such warnings as these:

> . . . The coming into power of the German "National Socialists" would mean above all the extermination of the flower of the German proletariat, the disruption of its organizations, the extirpation of its belief in itself and its future. . . . For the immediate, perceptible future, for the next ten or twenty years, a victory of Fascism in Germany would mean a suspension in the development of revolutionary progress, collapse of the Comintern and the triumph of world imperialism in its most heinous and bloodthirsty forms. . . . Make haste, worker-Communists, you have very little time left!

Alas, Trotsky in his exile at Prinkipo was imagining himself in Petrograd in 1917, with chaos under the incompetent Republican government, the city full of army deserters, the navy disloyal, and above all with Lenin at his side to make the revolution. His warnings and prophecies sprang from masterly insight. The Communist revolution in Germany—and everywhere else—*has* been put off by twenty years; which means forever. The Third International *has* collapsed. Such paper existence as it preserves it owes to neglecting Trotsky's advice to order the attempt at power in Germany, which it knew would have been lunacy. But the Comintern has not enhanced its prestige by partially reversing itself and calling for a "united front against Fascism" just *after* Hitler's accession had made the whole question academic; one policy was as good as the other, and consistency would have been wiser. But one policy was as *bad* as the other, also. The Trotskyite criticism of the Comintern's decision to consider the Social Democrats merely milder Fascists, and Brüning as bad as Hitler, was entirely justified, as was his warning that that path instead of the "united front" meant disaster. But the Comintern view that Trotsky was merely indulging in disastrous "putschism" was likewise justified. The point is that the question was not one of this policy or that, of a wrong direction and a possible better reversal: *The task itself was hopeless*, and was bound to get the Comintern into a hopeless mess sooner or later. The opposite policy could have brought the same results, the same bitterness, the same irreconcilable factions. When business goes badly the partners fall out. The Communist revolution has been stopped by Fascism. Germany was its one hope among all the Western nations, "the weakest link in the Capitalist chain". Germany has taken the other road.

But the full significance of Hitler is better understood not by contrasting Fascists and Communists, but by examining as a whole the post-War dictatorships. In the pre-War period numerous cures for Capitalism were attempted, the most important of which were these three: the democratic, the humanitarian, and the moral. The democratic cure was the one tried in this country: the transformation of our limited democracy into a radical democracy by the progressive extension of the franchise, in the hope of curbing the destructive power of wealth. By the humanitarian remedy, I mean Marxism, which springs from an exaggerated sympathy for the weak and an exaggerated blaming of the powerful. Its proposal in essence is to reverse the positions of the weak and the powerful: to "expropriate the expropriators".

Socialism, as contrasted with Communism, took its "ideology" from Marx, but preferred ballots to insurrection as the road to the revolution. That is, it combined the ineffectuality of democracy with the inhumanity of Marxism. By the moral cure for Capitalism, I mean the effort of the churches, particularly the Catholic Church, to curb the evils of Capitalism by demonstrating and inveighing against the corrupt ethics at their root.

Of these three principal pre-War remedies for Capitalism, only the remedy of Marx has been able to make conspicuous headway. Why? I come back to the thesis of this paper: the only way to abolish a plutocracy is by establishing a monarchy. The chief significance of the Communist revolution is the same as that of the Fascist revolution and the Nazi revolution: the revival of monarchy. After a long interregnum, Europe is returning to its ancestral form of government. For Europe has at length determined to rid itself of Capitalism, the Usurper.

It will doubtless sound paradoxical to point to Karl Marx as the forerunner of a revival of monarchy —and of aristocracy, too, as will appear in a moment. But his permanent reputation will, I think, be owed to just that fact: that he was the first to see clearly that the only cure for Capitalism was monarchy. He was wrong on everything else—horribly wrong. But on that he was right. To be sure, he called it "the dictatorship of the proletariat", and thought of it as the gateway to socialism, which in turn was to melt blissfully into the rosy dawn of the Communist Utopia. His grasp of human nature was in general distorted to the point of being diseased, and he had no capacity for abstract thought. But the central political problem of the modern world did not elude him. As a devoted follower of Marx, Lenin was able to provide the first successful opposition that Capitalism has had, and to set up the first of the New Monarchies which are altering the course of history.

It should be noted that it is just this principle of monarchy in operation, and not the more distinctively Communist doctrines, which accounts for the high esteem in which the "Soviet experiment" has come to be held by so many foreign observers in recent years. There are, to be sure, other factors to account for the much better press obtained by Soviet Russia than by Fascist Italy, where the same monarchical principle is at work. These are the factors wherein Russia imitates all that is worst in our own society: materialism; the worship of science, pseudo-science, and applied science; humanitarianism, feminism, "modern" education, decadence of religion and family; size, hustle, efficiency, and so on. These as well as monarchy arouse admiration for the Communist State.

When one turns to Italy, seeking to learn the nature of the new monarchies, one gradually comes to realize that Mussolini is the most constructive statesman of our age. Not only did he grasp the need of monarchy, but he joined it to a sound moral system. The value of Mussolini's work passes almost totally unrecognized among us, owing to the liberal and radical domination of our press. The liberals are so beclouded by false ideas of liberty that they remember nothing but castor oil and the suppression of free speech—though they conveniently forget such things when they consider Russia. The radicals —and nearly everyone else—can think only in terms of the opposition between Capitalists and Workers; they can conceive no government *above* them both and zealous to protect the rights of all classes. If it is not a workers' government, it must be an exploiters' government, so down with it. They are led to this unreal contrast and hasty dismissal by their false conception of property: by their answering the Capitalist abuse of the rights of property with their silly but sinister over-simplification, *abolishing* private ownership of productive property. A State which safeguards property can only be, for them, an exploiting State. If you told them that property was the essential condition of liberty, and that was why it was safeguarded, they would laugh. They would never think of studying the experience of Italians to see from its application what truth there might be in the doctrine. I am not contending, let me hasten to add, that in Italy justice is invariably done and property always distributed equitably. I am saying that while the Communist conquest of a Capitalist State and the governing of it on a monarchical basis was important, the arrival of a monarch who does not level all before him but takes over a plutocratic State as a going concern, preserving its assets while correcting its evils, is an event of far greater importance. Not the least of its importance is the fact that it can happen again, whereas the Communist revolution cannot. In fact it has happened again, in Germany.

But notice the new form which monarchy has taken among us on its rebirth, a form unknown in European civil history. The old monarchs lost their power, it is generally agreed, because the aristocracy, the body of assistants which monarchs need, failed them: the aristocracies did not adapt themselves to the rise of commerce and the middle classes, but allowed themselves to be thrust aside or absorbed. Perhaps they could not have done otherwise; in any case they failed the monarchs, and monarchy declined. Now it is a familiar fact that the New Monarch comes into power surrounded by a large body of men devoted to their leader, and like him determined to rule the State in the interests of the whole people. In other words, the Communist Party is essentially an aristocracy, as is the Fascist Party and the Nazi Party.

Another specific note of the new monarchy and the new aristocracy is that they are not hereditary. It is not yet clear how the monarchical succession will occur, but it is probable that Russia has already provided the example: when the monarch dies, his cabinet selects his successor. This hierarchical election of the monarch, it will be noted, is the form of succession in the Catholic Church. It seems not unlikely that the oldest and most powerful organization in existence should have developed forms of government that could be adapted to civil purposes. The aristocracies, again, will probably resemble the Church in being publicly recruited, organized chiefly on an hierarchical basis, with individual devotion and ability recognized by advancement.

But these are mere speculations, thrown out in an attempt to discover what permanent features the new monarchies will have if they remain in power, as seems likely. They are altering and growing from day to day, and have by no means solved all their problems. But it is obvious that they are wrestling with their problems with an energy and freshness not paralleled in any of the older governments. It would not be surprising if Germany, that master of organization and thoroughness, made some contributions of her own. At its beginning the new German régime is essentially similar to the Italian, with perhaps a more determined conquest of plutocracy than Mussolini was able to attempt when he started. Hitler's first attention is rightly being given to restoring agriculture. But he is the first of the New Monarchs to face the awful problem of a heavily industrialized society. His decisions here may well mark, for better or for worse, a turning point in history. But it is too early to predict much of Germany. It is not even sure yet that the Third Reich will not turn out to be rather a revival of Prussianism than an experiment in the New Monarchy.

In another article I hope to discuss the possibility of the spread of the monarchical revival to countries where it is as yet unknown, particularly this country. My purpose here has been to seek a unifying principle in the political convulsions of the post-War period, and to show its relation to the main task of the immediate future: the destruction of Capitalism and the building of a healthier society, a society in which liberty and the family are safeguarded by widespread opportunity for ownership, in which the working of the land is raised to its rightful place as the first and best of industries, in which the fruits of nature and of man's inventiveness can be equitably shared, in which the spiritual and creative sides of life are richly nourished and given full freedom. S. C.